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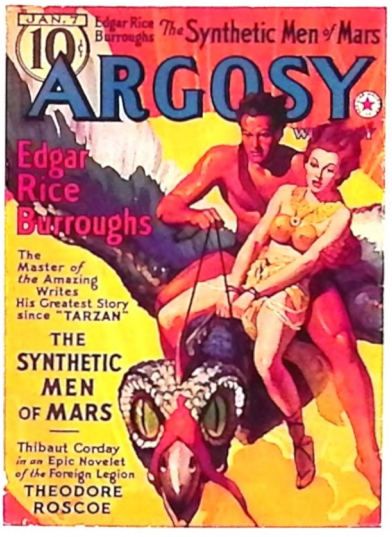
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(1900 – 1983)

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Illustration

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From the Editor...

The first thing you should notice about this latest issue is our new look...I hope you will like the heavier paper stock, and the perfect-binding. The magazine is now more "book-like" than ever, and it not only looks great, but should be more durable as well. I'm sure you will agree!

In this issue, David Saunders returns to out-do himself yet again with another great feature on an often overlooked pulp art master, Rudolph Belarski. I have long been a fan of Belarski's paperback book covers, and this new in-depth feature explores every aspect of his career—from the pulps to the paperbacks and beyond.

New contributor Louis Irmo has developed a feature on Australian master Norman Lindsay's adventures in America, and I am very excited to present Lindsay's spectacular watercolors, etchings, and drawings in this issue.

Finally, Aron Gagliardo returns to conclude his two-part feature on Chicago's American Academy of Art. It's full of gorgeous and rarely seen artwork.

In the "Reprint Department," my deluxe reprint edition of *Illustration* #3 is shipping now. If you missed out the first time around, or if you'd like to see even more great artwork from Robert Maguire and Eugene Iverd, etc., now is your chance.

Work on my third book release, Fred Taraba's *Masters of American Illustration: 41 Illustrators and How They Worked*, is continuing. I expect to be able to publish the book later this year. Stay tuned to the website for further developments as the project nears completion.

And finally, the long awaited second issue of *ILLO*, my magazine covering contemporary illustration, is available now. Please see the *ILLO* website for more information, www.ILLO.us.

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Letters to the Editor:

Greetings, Dan,

I'm writing to thank you so much for giving me two of the best art books in my collection. This is no small thing. I've got a massive collection, which includes everything from John Bauer, to the ERB Library of Illustration books, to all of Gerry de la Ree's art books, to ballet books, Hershenson's beautiful movie poster books, and every other possible horror/fantasy/sci-fi/pulp-art book, and all of the Fenners' publications. And every freaking thing in between. I think it's a sickness. But of all these beautiful books, your two books are second to none. Absolutely gorgeous. I've had them for quite some time, and have read both of them twice. A side note—I'm especially amazed that Reynold Brown was present at a nuclear shot in 1952. Incredible.

Beautiful portraits of both artists, and fantastic collections of their work. Thanks so much!

I can't wait for this new "American Illustrators" book.

Keep up the great work!

John L.
Rockville, MD

Dear John:

Thank you for your enthusiasm and wonderful compliments! The new Masters of American Illustration *book by Fred Taraba is in production now, and will be coming soon. Stay tuned!*

Dear Dan,

TWO THUMBS UP for the American Academy of Art story in the current issue. Maybe I am a little partial—I attended the Academy in the mid-'50s. Needless to say, I am looking forward—with eager anticipation—to Part Two in the next issue of *Illustration*.

Best regards,
Dave H.
Melbourne, FL

Dan,

Wanted to tell you that the article on the "Academy" in issue 26 was the coveted article I never thought I'd see. All my heroes went there, and the pictures and research that went into it were just sensational. For me, the head study of the girl on page 71 was the high point of an issue already filled with them. And check out Sundblom in his 20s! I can't wait to see the full, expanded article.

If you've had a chance to tour the school, they probably showed you the Sunny's (the "discus thrower" charcoal already featured in this issue), Elvgren's, and Harry's that they store in their small warehouse closet. I'm even told that Harry took over some classes for Loomis at one point. Oddly, what I know about Loomis teaching there is next to nothing, even after all these years. Hope you can shed some light on the subject.

As a side note, you were right...the ads are getting better, as you predicted!

You forge ahead with a simply superb periodical, Dan. You must be immensely proud.

Steve R.
Peoria, AZ

Dear Steve:

I haven't had a chance to visit the Academy yet, but I hope to very soon. Aron's second installment in this issue sheds more light on this amazing place, and the many wonderful instructors and students over the years.

Hi Dan,

Do you have plans to reprint Illustration #6 any time soon? I just attended a show of Robert Peak's artwork, and I was thoroughly impressed. I would love to buy your 6th issue, but no one seems to have it and I never see it on eBay. Any info on this would be appreciated.

Keep up the great work!

Joe M.

Dear Joe:

I have just reprinted Illustration #3, and as long as the demand for these reprinted versions continues, I hope to eventually reprint all of the previous issues. Thanks for your inquiry and stay tuned for more soon.

Dear Dan,

Thank you so much for producing such a wonderful magazine. I have been a subscriber since the very beginning, and I think what you're doing is simply amazing.

I would like to suggest a few illustrators for you to profile in future issues: Edwin Georgi, Jon Whitcomb, Coby Whitmore, Alex Ross, and others from magazines like *Good Housekeeping* and *Cosmopolitan*. They are my favorites, and I would like to know more about them. Thank you again,

Lawrence D.

Dear Lawrence:

Thanks for your suggestions. I hope to feature all of those great artists and many more in the years to come!

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Rudolph Belarski in his studio, 1958

Rudolph Belarski (1900–1983)

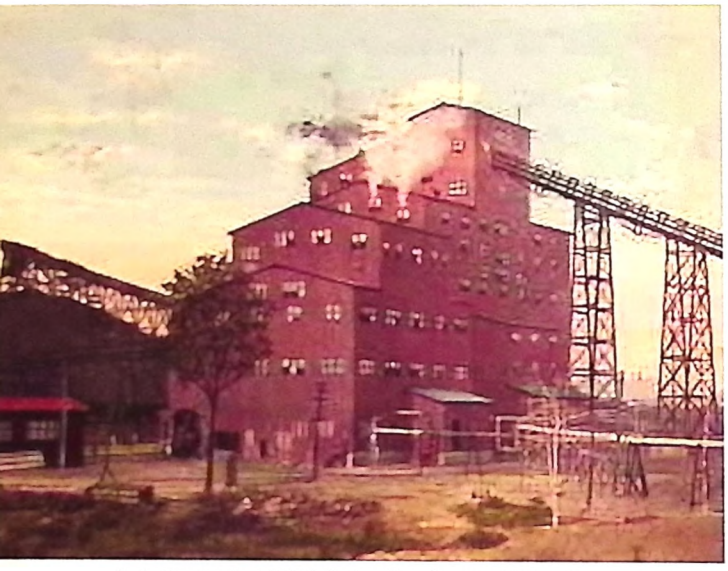
by David Saunders

Out from the orange-colored sky, soaring on the back of a giant blue Martian malagor, the Barsoomian Princess, with her red hair flying wildly, wears only a transparent silken veil and a solid gold bra and bling, with three strings of pearls draped over her fair-skinned thighs, tensed with the thrill of airborne adventure and the embrace of John Carter of Mars from *The Synthetic Men of Mars* by Edgar Rice Burroughs. This cover painting of *Argosy Weekly* appeared January 7, 1939 on newsstands nationwide, where it drew thousands of bystanders to stop and admire the artistry of the classic American illustrator, Rudolph Belarski.

Rudolph Belarski was born on May 27, 1900 in Dupont, Pennsylvania. The small coalmining town was named after Dupont Explosives, a local company that made dynamite for mining. Rudy's 32-year-old father, Joseph, had immigrated to America in 1897 and his 30-year-old mother, Margaret, later followed with their two sons, Ted (7) and Emil (6) in 1899. They came from a small town named Mosciska, in what is now Poland, though at that time was an autonomous province of Austria-Hungary called Galicia. Austria is a center of the Holy Roman Empire, so most Galicians were devout Catholics, including the Belarskis. The turn of the century was a period of massive economic emigration of Galicians to America. They were fleeing political upheaval and widespread poverty. Although his parents could neither read nor write English, they followed thousands of other Polish-speaking Galicians to work in the coalmines of Pennsylvania. They rented an apartment above a bar at 405 Main Street in Dupont, which is an outer borough of Pittston, just beside the Susquehanna River and southwest of Scranton. Their house was near a branch line railroad track that served the mines. Rudy was the family's first American-born child. One year later Walter was born, and then came Helen, Hermione, and Veronica, making seven Belarski children in all. When Rudy was six he began to attend public school, but as soon as he was twelve, like his brothers before him, Rudy was legally entitled to work full time for the local coal industry, so his formal education ended in the sixth grade.

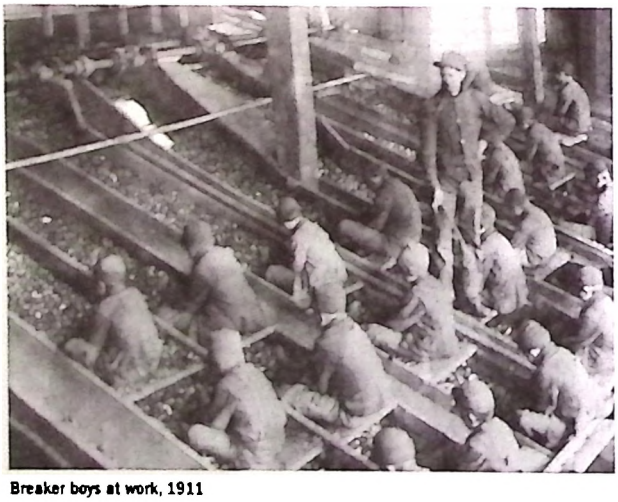
The Pennsylvania Coal Company owned the Hillside Coal & Iron Company in Pittston, which operated the Butler Colliery, where large numbers of small boys were needed to work as slate pickers in the coal-breaking division. Little Rudy went to work at the breaker plant, which was a mechanical complex for crushing large chunks of coal into smaller sizes through gravity-fed chutes and roller bars. "Breaker boys" sat astride wooden chutes to remove rocks and debris from the coal by hand as it rattled downhill beneath them. The constant flow of anthracite rocks created coal dust that polluted their lungs and occasionally became dense enough to obscure their vision. When possible, the coal company preferred these small boys to do their work without becoming mangled in the hazardous machinery, but to prevent an excess of caution from slowing down production, a vigilant foreman walked among the breaker boys with a whipping cane.

Original cover illustration for *Argosy Weekly*, January 7, 1939. Oil on canvas, 33" x 24"



Butler Breaker Plant, Hillside Coal and Iron Company, Pittston, PA

Pittston breaker boys photographed by Lewis Hine, 1911



Breaker boys at work, 1911

According to the eyewitness account of labor reformer John Spargo in his book, *The Bitter Cry of the Children* (1906):

> "Work in the coal breakers is exceedingly hard and dangerous. Crouched over the chutes, the boys sit hour after hour, picking out the pieces of slate and other refuse from the coal as it rushes past to the washers and crushers. From the cramped position they have to assume, most of them become more or less deformed and bent-backed like old men. The coal is hard, and accidents to the hands, such as cut, broken, or crushed fingers, are common among the boys. Sometimes there is a worse accident, when a terrified shriek is heard and a boy is devoured by the machinery and disappears down the chute to be picked out later smothered and dead. Clouds of dust fill the breakers and are inhaled by the boys, laying the foundations for asthma and miners' consumption. 12-year-old boys work day after day, for 10 hours at a stretch, for 60 cents a day. The gloom of the breaker is appalling. Outside the sun shines brightly, the air is clear and the birds sing in chorus with the trees and the rivers. Within the breaker there is blackness, clouds of deadly dust enfolding everything, the harsh, grinding roar of the machinery and the ceaseless rushing of coal through the chutes fills the ears. Boys 12 years of age are legally employed in the mines, by day or by night, and for as many hours as the employers care to make them toil or their bodies will stand the strain."

Rudy's only relief from this sooty grind was when the Belarski children were occasionally sent into the surrounding Pocono Mountains to pick wild blueberries, which were later sold by the basket or as homemade *borowki* preserves and *mazurki* pastries. These outings, where Rudy could breathe the fresh mountain air, were the only clean and wholesome recovery periods in his life of filthy low-paid labor. During these visits to the mountains, the entire family would share their tents with children from other neighborhood families that were all part of the crew. The camping adventures in the Poconos were Rudy's happiest childhood memories.

In 1913 Rudy's older brother, Ted, quit working in the mines and found a job with a local printer. Ted learned the trade and eventually started the area's first Polish language newspaper, *Polish Gornik*, and he went on to become a prominent civic leader. He authored several Polish plays that were dramatized on radio and his portrait still hangs in the Dupont Town Hall. As the family's eldest son, Ted was a natural born leader. He started the first local troop of the Boy Scouts to help Rudy and other young breaker boys experience nature's restorative powers to counteract their oppressive working conditions. Rudy became a faithful member of the Boy Scouts and developed a profound feeling for the wholesome joys of camping and fishing. From these formative experiences, Rudy Belarski acquired a lifelong habit of alternating periods of intensive labor with periods of pastoral retreat.

As soon as he grew too big to perch astride the slate picker's coal chute, Rudy was promoted to mule driver. His new job

Butler Colliery breaker boys, 1913. Rudy Belarski is circled in white

was to lead a mule up and down the mine, towing a coal car on rails. The mule driver's working conditions were also described by the labor reformer, John Spargo:

> "The boys graduate from the breakers to the mine depths, where they become door tenders, switch boys, or mule drivers. Far below the surface, work is even more dangerous. At 14 or 15 the boys assume the same risks as the men, and are surrounded by the same perils. I met one little fellow who was employed as a 'trap boy.' He operated a safety door that confined leaks of toxic flammable gas from spreading throughout the maze of mine shafts. He sat alone in a dark mine passage hour after hour, with no human soul near. He saw no living creature except the mules and their drivers that passed with their loads, or a rat or two. He stood in muddy water that covered his ankles, chilled to the marrow by the cold draughts that rushed in when he opened the trap door for the mules to pass through. He worked for 14 hours—waiting—opening and shutting a door—then waiting again, all for only 60 cents."

When women finally received the right to vote in 1920, one of the first reforms initiated was a Child Labor Amendment to the Constitution, first submitted to the states in 1924. This national reform movement was motivated in large part by public outrage over the groundbreaking documentary photojournalism of Lewis Hine (1874-1940). Hine believed the camera was a powerful instrument of social reform and he photographed the child labor abuses of breaker boys in Pittston, PA in 1911. His profoundly disturbing photos were reproduced in newspapers nationwide, and galvanized public opinion against the ruthless greed of energy companies that profited from such inhuman disregard for their fellow man. While considering the creative contribution of Rudolph Belarski to American popular culture, it is chilling to realize that he and all his brothers spent their childhoods working in the exact same breaker plant featured in these astonishing historic photographs. Rudy and his older brothers were all intimately familiar with the deplorable working conditions of the Pittston Breaker Plant.

Rudy Belarski, 1913

Rudy escaped this oppressive fate by unleashing his creative talent. Al Redicka was a boyhood friend who worked beside Belarski in the breaker house. He later recalled, "Rudy was a born artist. He was very talented as a child and he didn't improve—he didn't have to, because it was in him! He was a professional at eight or nine years of age! He could draw your portrait in a matter of minutes! What's more, he never copied anything. His work was original!" Redicka was an eyewitness on the day that Rudy's life story fatefully changed when he drew a picture on the coal company's engine house wall. According to Rudy's youngest sister, Veronica, "Rudy drew a picture on the whitewashed wall of a building near the mine entrance. It was a portrait of the mine superintendent. He was a manager in charge of several coalmines. Rudy's drawing was seen by one of the foremen and he liked it so much that he gave Rudy the job of painting safety posters for the company." The 16-year-old Belarski was suddenly elevated from a lowly mule driver to a "skilled laborer." Hopefully it is impossible for anyone to imagine just how hard Rudy's life had been up until this point; but it will be difficult to appreciate just how grateful Rudy was for this miraculous intervention without understanding the extent of his hardships. It was probably an unforgettable thrill to return home from work that day and report the news to his astonished family. His youthful self-image may have reached uncharted heights of skyrocketing pride and empowerment.

Rudy's new job was to work with the plant manager in a brick power house, where they tended a coal-fired boiler that ran a turbine to generate electricity for the lighting of the Butler Colliery. Belarski painted safety signs throughout the facilities. He also learned how to clean and repair heavy machinery. This included warehousing and hoisting equipment, compressors, pumps, ventilating fans, shop tools and milling machines, as well as the repair and maintenance of engines and generators. The plant manager soon discovered that Rudy had a genuine knack for working with mechanical things.

To be certified in mine safety, Rudy had to pass a state-mandated examination. Due to an excessive amount of mining accidents, the publisher of a Scranton mining journal insisted that miners be educated in mine safety beyond what they learned from apprenticeships. In response, the state of Pennsylvania passed the Mine Safety Act, which required safety inspectors to take a standardized examination. The test was exhaustive and the language was confusing for miners who spoke little or no English. Most of the miners lacked the technical skill to answer the test questions because the rigors of their employment left time for only a rudimentary education. Miners needed help to prepare for the examinations, so the International Correspondence Schools (ICS) of Scranton, Pennsylvania was founded. Miners enrolled in the program with the hope to earn a diploma as well as job security. The coursework was written in simple language, so that even those with only a basic knowledge of English could enroll. In addition to mine safety, courses were also offered in a wide range of engineering trades, commerce, and ornamental art design.

The company enrolled Rudy in the ICS mine safety course, but after looking at their brochures, Rudy also signed up for the ICS art course with his own money. The cost was $120, which he paid in forty monthly installments of three dollars. This payment plan allowed poor miners to enroll in these courses for financial advancement, but by 1917, the appeal of ICS courses had expanded nationwide beyond the coal industry to over two million cumulative enrollments. The business was marketed to prospective students who were looking to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps and climb the social ladder, as advocated by the popular Horatio Alger books. This profile certainly fit Belarski's philosophy and work ethic. He wanted to get ahead in life, though he later admitted, "I was very green, really. I had heard that artists drew with charcoal but, I thought one was supposed to draw with big lumps of coal, until the packets of art supplies arrived in the mail with little sticks of charcoal—then I understood."

With no time for school, Rudy educated himself in his spare time by reading books from his local library. His favorite subjects were art history, literature, and philosophy. His best friend was another teenage Polish mineworker named Faustin Wirkus. Rudy's youngest sister, Veronica Belarski, recalled, "Rudy and Faustin would walk to the library in West Pittston and return to read their books on Hughestown Hill overlooking town." Faustin quit his job in the mines and joined the Marines in 1918. He was eager to get out of Pittston and to experience the adventurous world of fighting in the Great War. After receiving a compound fracture in his right arm during basic training, Faustin was disqualified from frontline service in Europe. Nevertheless, he still found plenty of outrageous escapades to write home about to his envious pal.

Rudy reported for his own draft registration on September 12, 1918, and according to that record, he was medium weight, medium build with gray eyes, dark hair, and had flat feet, which excluded him from military service. His employment was impressively listed as the "Plant Headman" at the Thomas Shaft for the Hillside Coal & Iron Company of Pittston. All male Belarskis were also required to sign up for registration. Rudy's father was too old to serve and his brother Ted was disqualified because of a heart condition that had resulted from rheumatic fever.

Instead of the trenches in France, Faustin Wirkus was sent as a Sergeant in the *gendarmerie* to pacify civil unrest and banditry in Haiti. He learned to speak Creole and was eventually assigned resident sub-district commander of the Haitian island La Gonave. A local voodoo queen declared that he was the reincarnation of the long dead Emperor Faustin, so she had him crowned the King of Gonave. Faustin was a decent man with a good sense of humor who accepted this position of "authority" with a genuine regard for the Haitians. In fact, he married at least one of them, after determining that she was a mixed race descendant of an exiled Polish legionnaire of Napoleon. Faustin wrote outrageous letters to Rudy describing many exotic adventures, which inspired Rudy with dreams of his own heroic fantasies. After Faustin was discharged from the Marines he wrote an account of his experiences, which was

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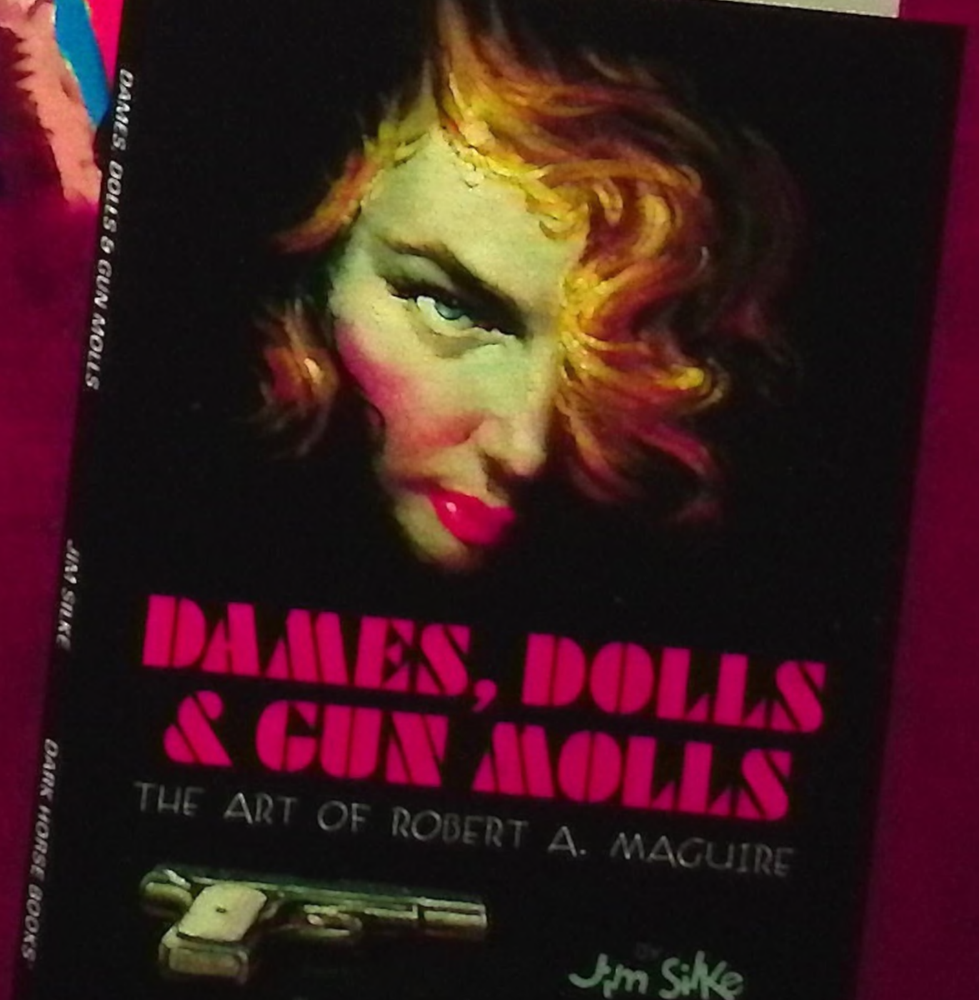

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The Belarski family's Main Street soda fountain, 1922. (Joseph Belarski leans on his new car)

The Belarski family home at 132 East Eighth Street, Wyoming, PA

published by Doubleday as the best-selling book, *The White King of La Gonave*.

During Prohibition, Rudy's father remodeled the first floor bar of their Main Street home into a cozy neighborhood "soda fountain" to supplement the family income. A family photo shows a Coca Cola display in the front window and Rudy's hand-lettered sign on the awning, "ICE CREAM CAKE & CANDY CIGARS TOBACCO and GROCERIES." Like many such "mom & pop" establishments in America at that time, the Belarski soda fountain was unaccountably prosperous. Somehow the shop earned enough for the proud Joseph Belarski to buy a 1921 Oldsmobile touring car and a new family house two miles southwest along the Susquehanna River at 132 East Eighth Street in Wyoming, PA.

Rudy enjoyed his work supervising the plant facilities. He passed his ICS correspondence course in mine safety, as well as the examination mandated by the state of Pennsylvania. The Hillside Iron & Coal Company needed a certified plant facilities engineer, so they decided to send Rudy to Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY for training, where their investment in his tuition would yield a certified and indebted future employee. At that time, Pratt was a technical school funded by a benevolent oil tycoon to provide affordable training in practical skills with commercial industrial applications, such as engineering, architecture, drafting, lettering, industrial design, printing, and illustration. So in 1922, Rudy Belarski left his Pennsylvania hometown and took the train to New York City where he started his professional training as well as his own thrilling adventures.

After Rudy registered at the school, he surreptitiously enrolled in several art classes as well, and added more art courses to his curriculum after each successive semester. One of his new art teachers was an impressive modernist landscape painter named Max Richard Hermann (1879-1958). At the same time that Hermann was teaching figure drawing and illustration at Pratt, he was also showing with the prestigious Babcock Galleries in NYC. His painting, "Morning Light," was singled out for praise in the *New York Times*, and his works were in the collection of the Brooklyn Museum, the National Academy of Design, and the Art Institute of Chicago, and he was a member of the Salmagundi Art Club.

Hermann took a benevolent interest in Belarski. While studying at Pratt, Rudy earned his keep by waiting on tables, painting signs, and sketching portraits. While teaching art classes at a settlement house for boys across the street from Pratt, Rudy took remedial classes to further his own secondary school education. During summer months he went back to stay at his parent's home and attended Wyoming Seminary Upper School in Kingston, PA, where he was finally able to earn a high school diploma. Rudy later quipped about his academic challenge, "I knew the words, but not how to say them all."

When the mine company received Rudy's progress reports from Pratt, they eventually realized that his training had gradually shifted from the engineering school to the art program. They demanded he switch back to engineering or lose their funding, but by then Rudy was determined to become an artist. He told them, "If you want to send me to art school, fine, otherwise forget it!" From then on, Rudy had to work his own way through Pratt Institute. The school motto meant a great deal to Rudy: "Be true to your work and it will be true to you." The coalmines had taught Rudy all about hard work,

Rudy Belarski with his father and mother, 1926

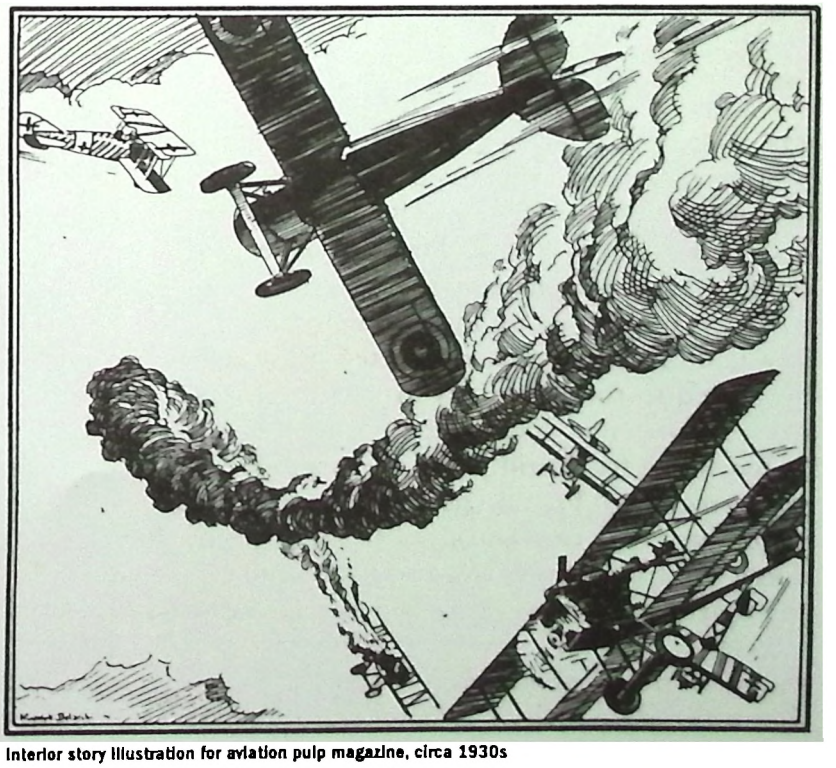
so he was well prepared to apply himself to the study of commercial art while earning a living from odd jobs. Students who were funded from home were able to concentrate on schoolwork and pass the Pratt program in three years, but for students who needed to balance class work with job work, the course took four years to complete. While studying at Pratt, Rudy crossed the paths of many artists who would go on to have their own distinguished careers as illustrators, including Frederick Blakeslee, Walter Baumhofer, Eugene Frandzen, John Fleming Gould, Arthur Leslie Ross, and Harold Winfield Scott.

Rudy Belarski, 1928

Rudy concentrated on illustration and won gold medals for Poster and Commercial Art and several first prizes for figure drawing. He was on the track and basketball teams and was also manager of the soccer team and the chairman of the Artsman Athletic Committee. Rudolph Belarski completed Pratt's certificate program in Drawing, Painting, and Illustration in 1925. His name appears on the graduation list and yearbook of June 1925. Pratt did not offer a college degree at that time, but graduates of the art discipline were awarded a certificate, while a diploma was only granted to those students who had completed training as educators and librarians. Rudy's student profile in *The Pratonnia* says he was "The master-mind of the Artsmen, and a sign-painter of great promise."

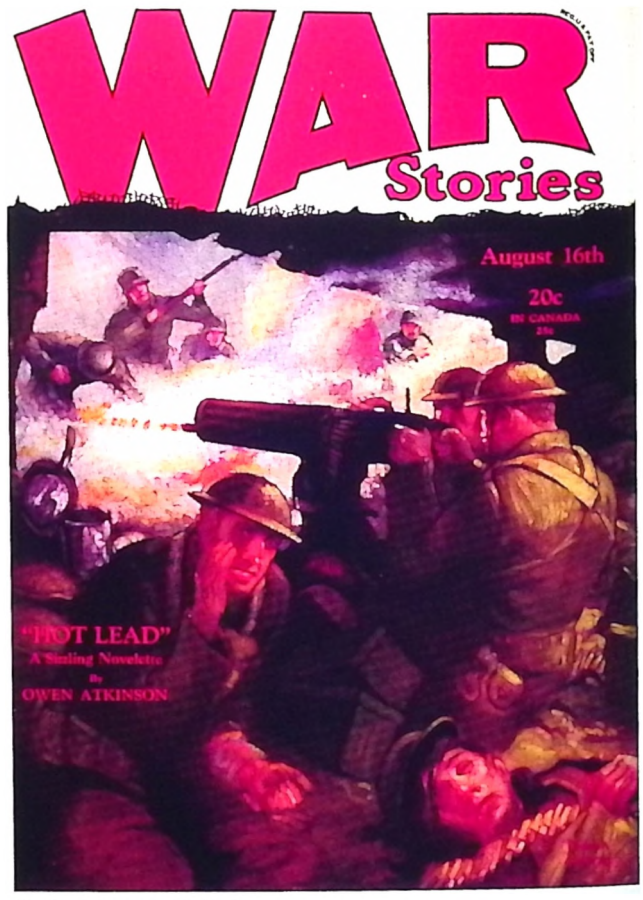
In the fall of 1925, Rudy Belarski was a professional certified illustrator. His two younger sisters, Helen and Hermione, were both working as secretaries in Manhattan, so he moved in with them. They all shared the apartment while Rudy used his bedroom as an art studio. Although he desperately needed to earn a living, he did not look for full-time work as a company staff artist. He was a rugged, freethinking individualist who preferred to remain unchained by responsibilities to any business but his own. He was determined to live by finding odd jobs as a freelance artist. His first published illustrations were black and white pen-and-ink story illustrations for Dell Publishing Company's pulp magazines. He was soon submitting paintings as prospective cover art. "Right after I left Pratt," Belarski said, "I went to George Delacorte. At that time I was sort of gung-ho on the war stuff, and I had painted a war picture. Delacorte bought it immediately. In fact, he liked it so much that he hung it up in the main office, which made me very proud of course. That started me off, and I did a lot of pulp stuff for them." Rudy was fascinated with war stories because he had longed for the swashbuckling adventures that he and Faustin Wirkus had so keenly imagined. Some of the pulp magazine authors that Rudy met while working for Dell had been actual combat flyers in the Great War, and Rudy was inspired by their first-hand accounts of air combat. Along with freelance art assignments, Belarski also found work as an art teacher and art lecturer. According to a public service announcement in *The New York Times*, "Rudolph Belarski will be giving a lecture on October 13th, 1928 at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, Saturday morning at 11:30, 'How Stories Are Illustrated,' sponsored by the School Art League, a cultural organization headquartered at the Barbizon, as part of their Fall program of free lectures at city museums, which are free to members, the public and high school pupils."

War Birds, September 1928



Interior story illustration for aviation pulp magazine, circa 1930s

War Stories, January 17, 1928



War Stories, August 16, 1928

Belarski was a gifted art teacher. In the fall of 1928, "Mr. Rudolph Belarski" first appears on the faculty lists of Pratt Institute in their course catalog as an *Evening Instructor in Commercial Illustration*. The following year he is listed as *Evening Instructor in Advertising Design*, and in the Fall 1930 catalog he is listed as both *Instructor in Drawing* and *Instructor in Advertising Layout for Day Classes*, as well as *Instructor in Life Drawing for Evening Classes*. Records indicate that he last taught at Pratt in June 1931.

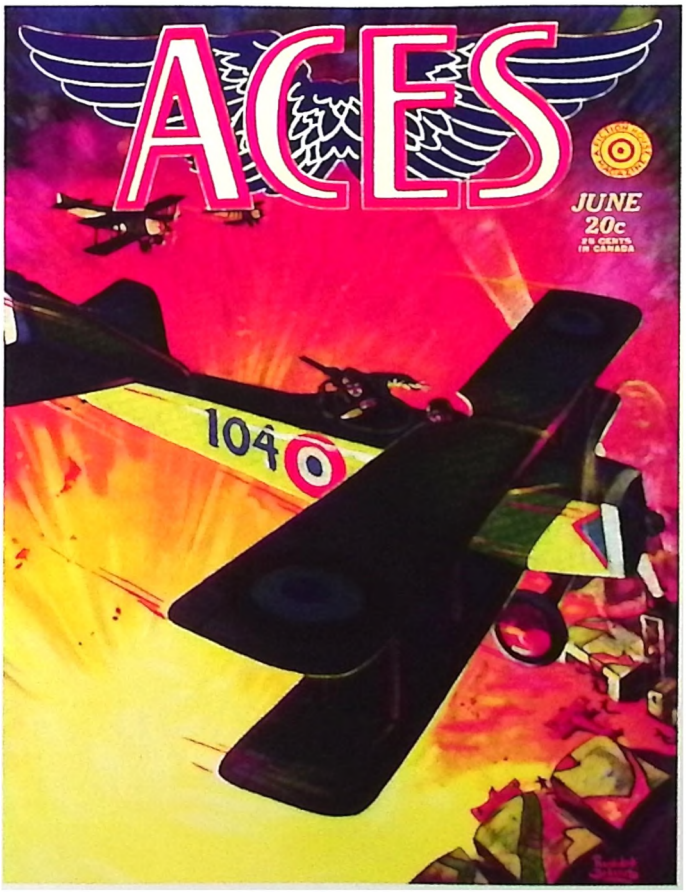
Belarski's art career had begun during the pioneer days of American aviation. In 1927, Charles "Lucky" Lindbergh flew the first solo non-stop transatlantic flight for which he was awarded worldwide fame, national adoration, and the Medal of Honor. Aviation was one of the definitive characteristics of Rudy's generation. His first action adventure paintings were published on the covers of Dell's pulp magazines *War Birds*, *War Novels*, and *War Stories*. He later created covers for *War Aces*, as well as *Terence X. O'Leary's War Birds*. For Fiction House Publications he created covers for *Aces* and *Wings*, and for Ramar Publications he did *Airplane Stories*. At this same time, America was also in the golden age of the model airplane hobby. Rudy visited a local hobby shop where he bought and assembled a squadron of his own toy aircraft. After selecting his featured planes, the toys were suspended on strings at eye level and carefully poised in mid-flight before his easel. He arranged them with dramatic lighting effects and studied them for visual reference for his pulp aviation cover paintings. This clever mechanical approach to his subject helped Belarski to produce dramatic compositions that would have been difficult to imagine if his only reference material had been the typical grainy black and white documentary photos of actual WWI aerial combat that were used by other illustrators.

In 1932 Rudy's childhood pal and bestselling author, Sgt. Faustin Wirkus, had returned to Haiti to make a documentary film about his sensational experiences called *Voodoo*. The 36-minute black and white sound movie was shot by, written by, and starred Faustin Wirkus. The novelty of his documentary film caused a flurry of interest at its premiere in New York City when word got around that it contained several shocking scenes of writhing topless dancers. Rudy attended the premiere and was proud of Faustin's celebrity; at this point, for the first time in their friendship, the two boyhood pals from Dupont were both notably successful.

Rudy's mounting workload overwhelmed the confines of his space at his sisters' apartment, so on November 18, 1933 he rented his own apartment at 27 West 10th Street, NYC. Rudy enjoyed the privacy of having his own bachelor's pad, and the thrill of running his own professional art studio. Rudy's work was so successful that he was soon overwhelmed with a backlog of assignments. He convinced his fellow art teacher and Pratt graduate, Frederick Blakeslee, to take over some of his excess assignments, and in so doing, helped to launch

Airplane Stories, April 1929

Airplane Stories, May 1929



ACES, June 1930

George Bruce's Air Novels, 1931

ACES
FICTION HOUSE MAGAZINES
AUGUST
20c
25 CENTS IN CANADA
THE SKY-BORN
What does it take to make an ace—to make a man bid his hand in the greatest game of life—and death?
A complete war-air novel by
GEORGE BRUCE
3
Complete Novels in this Issue
Other Real War-air Features

ACES, August 1931

FIGHTING ACES OF WAR SKIES
WINGS
FICTION HOUSE MAGAZINES
DEC. ~ 20c
25 CENTS IN CANADA
THE EAGLE'S BROTHER
A new GEORGE BRUCE novel of the war-ridden skies
Complete in this issue
THE WILD SQUADRON
Another complete war-air novel by HERMAN PETERSEN
Rudolph Belarski

WINGS, December 1931

Original cover illustration for *ACES*, Winter, 1937, Oil on canvas, 30" x 22"

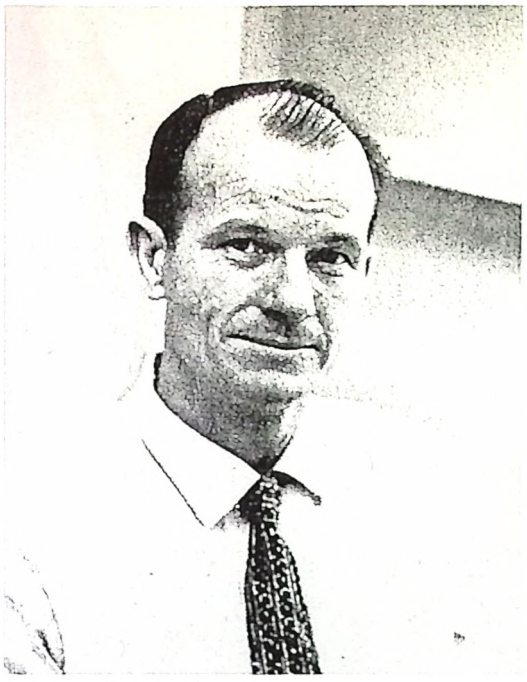
This cover features the decorated WWI French ace fighter pilot Charles Nungesser (1892-1927), and his Nieuport airplane with the distinctive "N" on the tail section. After the war, Nungesser worked in Hollywood as a stunt flyer on aviation films, such as *The Dawn Patrol*. In 1927 he died at sea while attempting the world's first non-stop transatlantic flight, only two weeks before Charles Lindbergh. His body was never found and his disappearance is one of the great mysteries of aviation history. Five years after his death, this painting was commissioned by Fiction House for the cover of *ACES* for the Winter of 1932. Unfortunately, the company stopped printing all pulp magazines during their historic restructuring, and *ACES* did not resume publication until 1937

Original cover illustration for *ACES*, November 1932. Oil on canvas, 30" x 20"

Original cover illustration for *WINGS*, August 1932. Oil on canvas, 30" x 21"

Original cover illustration for *WINGS*, March 1935. Oil on canvas, 30" x 21"

Original cover illustration for Argosy, June 18, 1938. Oil on canvas, 34" x 24"



Emery Clarke, circa 1960s

Emery Clarke posed as various characters in numerous Belarski cover paintings

the career of another great pulp cover artist. Before Blakeslee attended Pratt he had been a designer at the Curtiss Aeroplane Company, so he had flown in most aircraft and was personally familiar with the actual details and operational characteristics of many planes. Belarski had no personal experience with flying WWI aircraft, but he more than compensated for that inexperience by bringing his own colorful flair to his thrilling compositions. Belarski's covers were wildly successful at capturing the public's enthusiasm for the sensational exploits of heroic aviators.

Belarski invented air adventure scenes that dazzled newsstand browsers with colorful pulp covers that shouted for attention as loudly as banner headlines. After a few years, Belarski's renown as a pulp artist had outgrown the pigeonhole of being only an aviation artist, and he was able to expand his career into a wider range of themes, including adventure, western, romance, sports, jungle, science-fiction, horror, mystery and detective.

In 1935 Belarski started to paint covers for Ned Pines' Thrilling Group and continued to receive additional assignments from increasingly prestigious pulp publishers such as Street & Smith and Frank A. Munsey Company, the publisher of *Argosy*. Rudy was soon painting some of his most memorable classic pulp covers under the guiding influence of Munsey's top artist, Emmett Watson, for magazines such as *Argosy, Big Chief Western, Cavalier Classics, Detective Fiction Weekly, Double Detective, Foreign Legion Adventures, Red Star Adventures, Sea Novel Magazine, Silver Buck Western,* and *All American Fiction.*

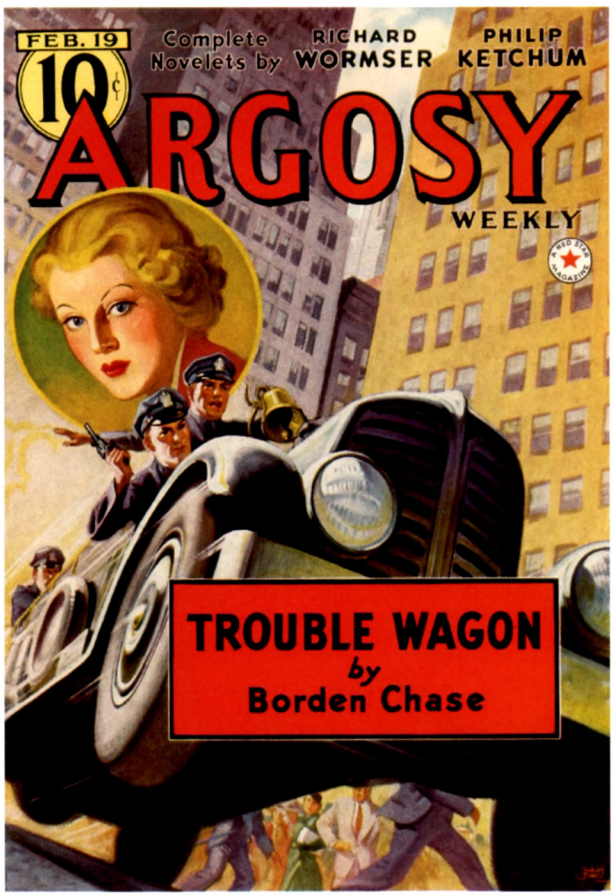
Dorothy Coryell, 1938. Oil on canvas, 20" x 18"

Painting cover illustrations for these new genres posed a different challenge for Belarski. According to the artist, "With that airplane stuff, you didn't need girl models, but when I began doing detective pulps I had to use girl models." That was a whole new experience. Whenever Rudy had needed a model to pose for his war pulps, he just asked his fellow artist pals to pose for him, such as Emery Clarke and Walt Baumhofer. Most illustrators were happy to oblige, in exchange for comparable services whenever their own emergency need might arise for a compliant model. When Rudy first needed to add female characters to his pulp cover paintings, he used reference photos of glamour girls because he was too shy to hire a model. Whenever his pin-up photos failed to provide enough visual information, Rudy asked Emery Clarke to pose in the same position. The resulting amalgamations were almost comically grotesque. Another colleague, Norman Saunders, recalls Belarski being very shy around girls, "He was so embarrassed that he preferred to use boys! Sometimes he could get away with it, but sometimes it was noticeable. Eventually, I sent a girl I knew round to Belarski, and that broke the ice." Rudy later recalled his budding admiration for the bountiful supply of pretty models available during the Great Depression, "In the early days there was a great surplus of women models that would come to your studio and pose for a dollar an hour." One of those models was a pretty strawberry-blonde named Dorothy Coryell, who Rudy affectionately called "Dolly." They were married in 1937 and moved to an apartment in Washington Heights, on 166th Street in Upper Manhattan.

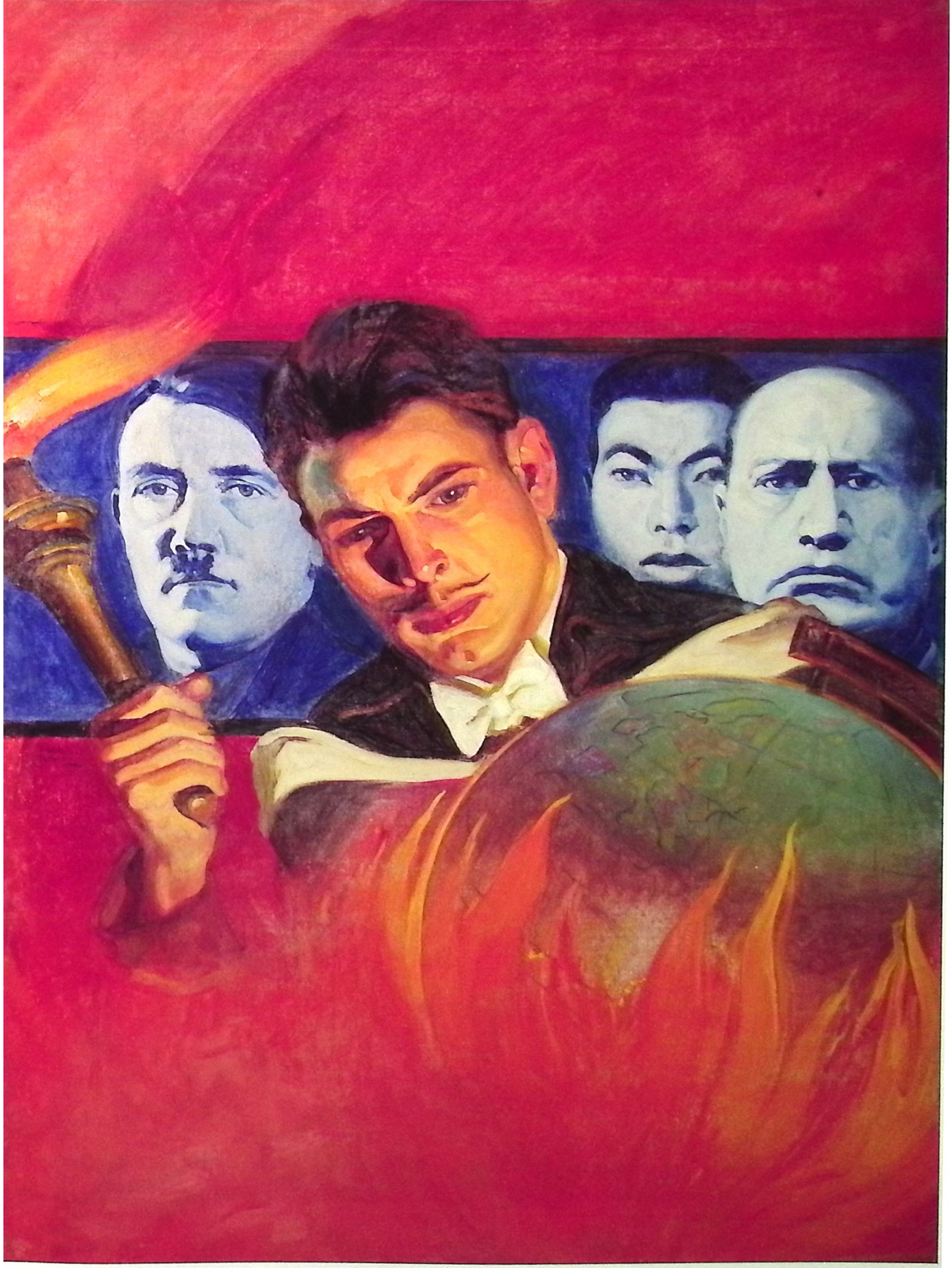
Argosy Weekly, July 6, 1935

Argosy Weekly, August 28, 1937

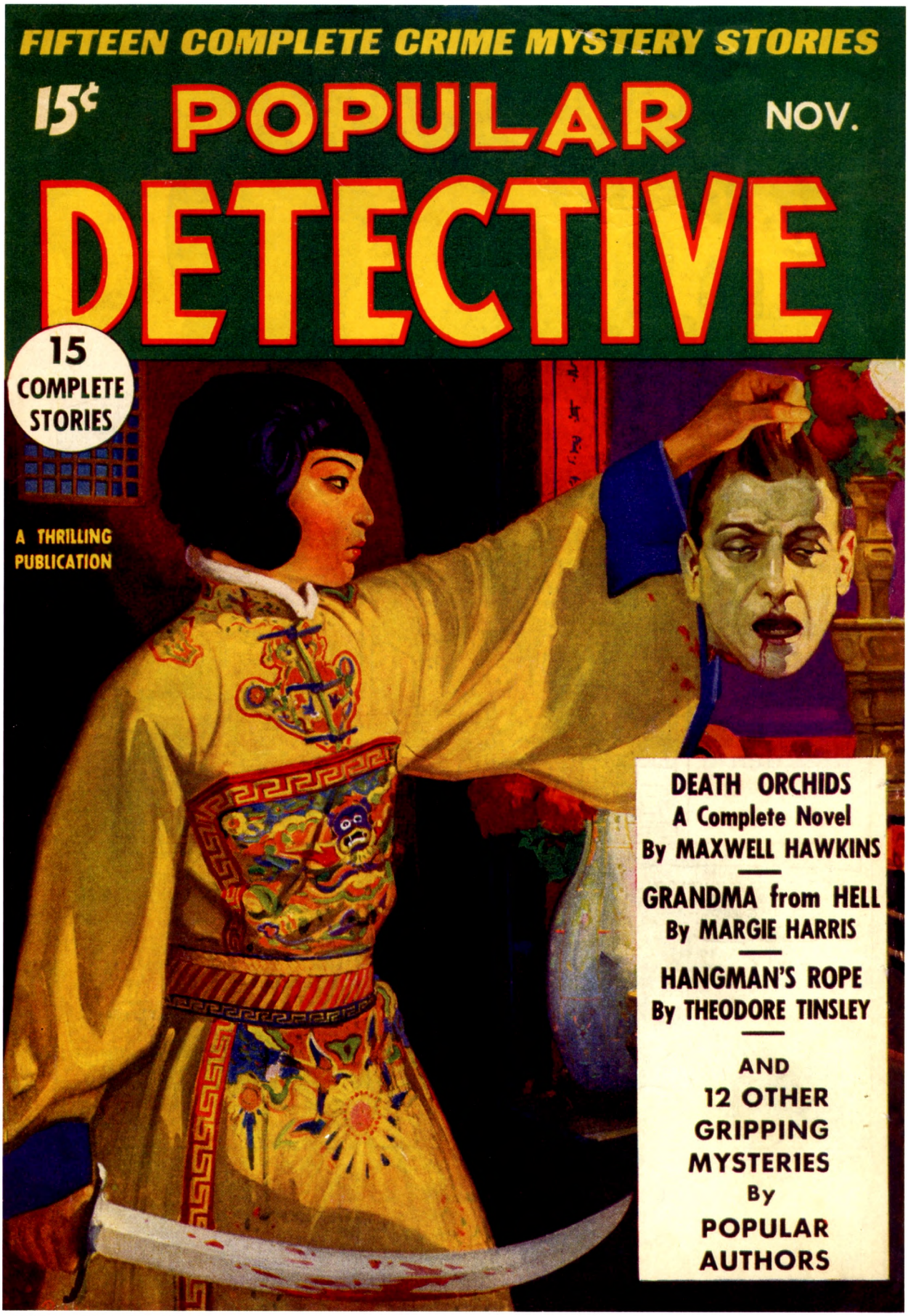
Argosy Weekly, November 13, 1937



Argosy Weekly, February 19, 1938

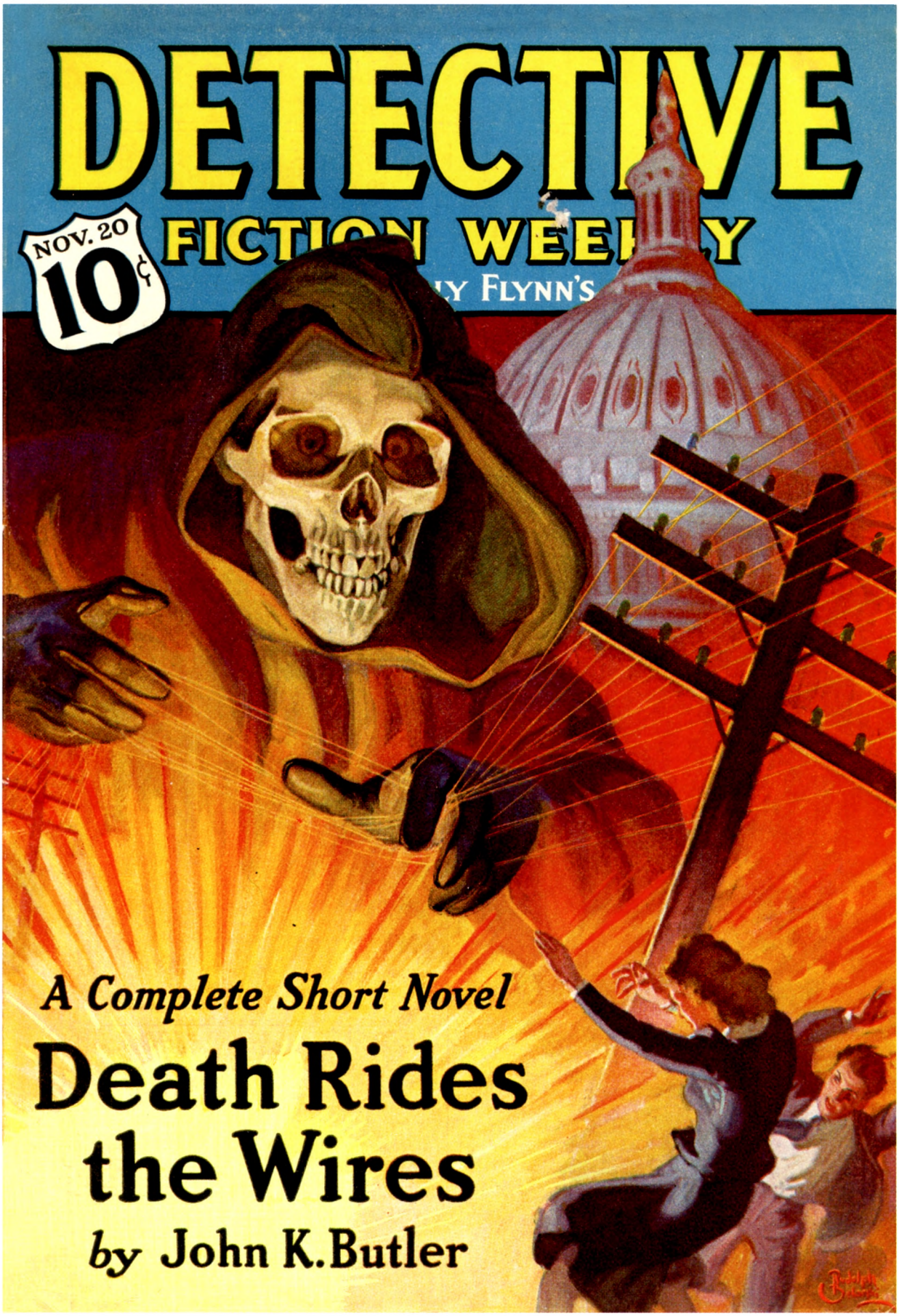


Original cover illustration for *Argosy Weekly*, June 4, 1938. Oil on canvas, 34" x 24"

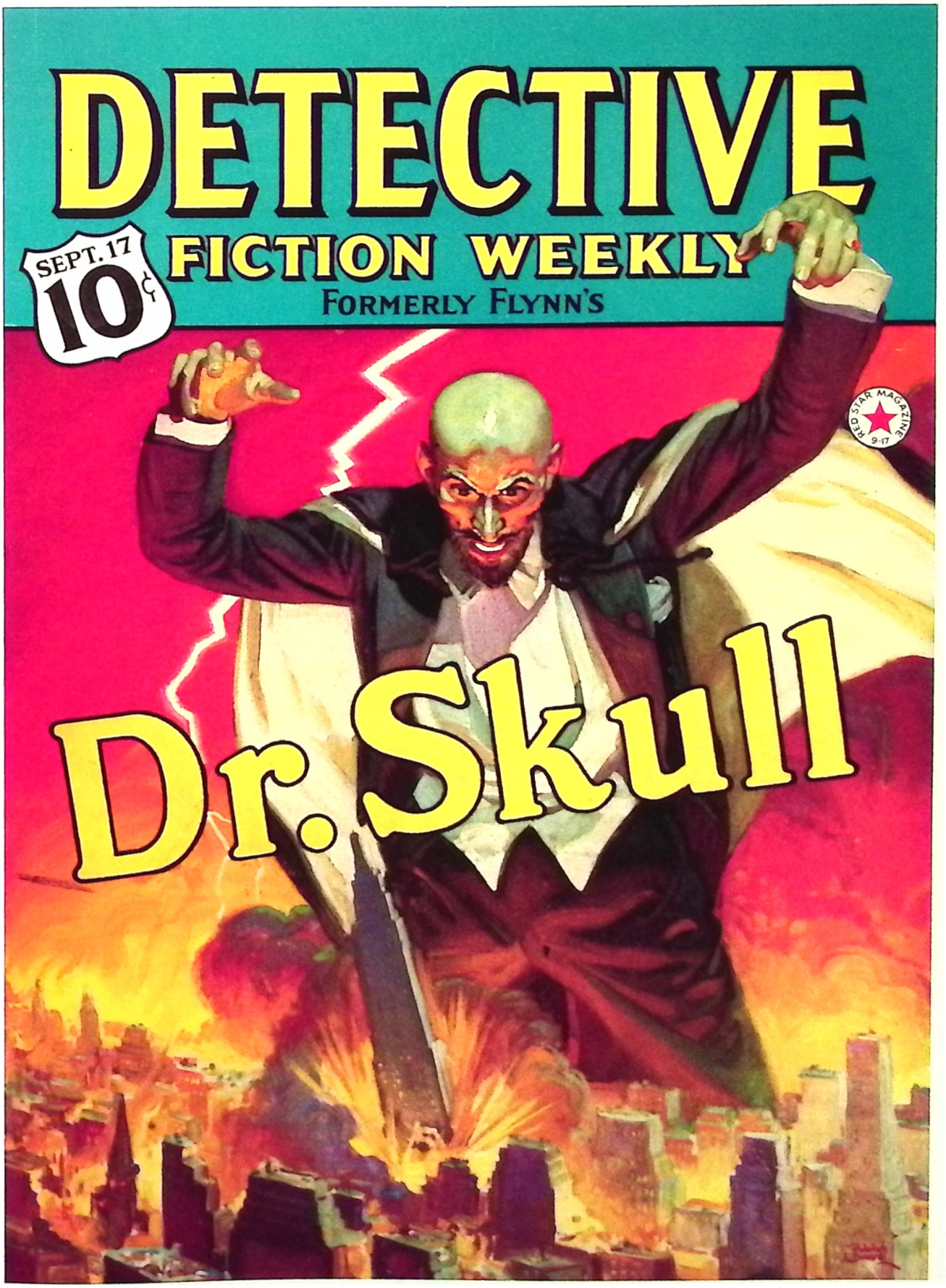


Popular Detective, November 1935

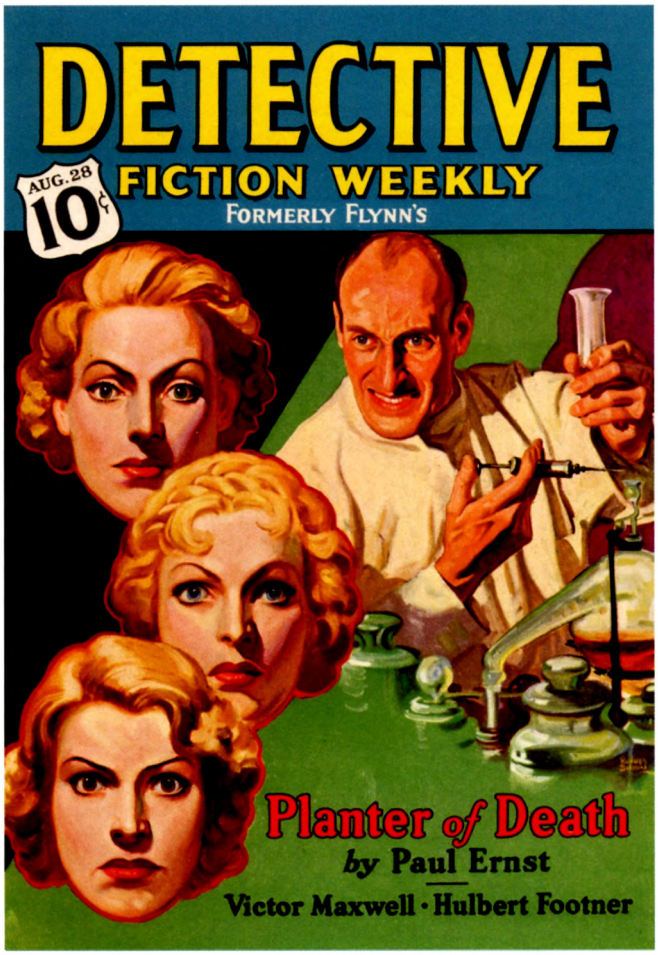
Thrilling Mystery, March 1936



Detective Fiction Weekly, November 20, 1937



Detective Fiction Weekly, September 17, 1938



Detective Fiction Weekly, August 28, 1937

All-American Fiction, July-August, 1938

Belarski's covers for Munsey pulps are strikingly beautiful. His use of color serves a greater purpose in the design of the total artwork than a mere allegiance to realism. His color choices literally sing with astonishing harmonies. Many of the shadow areas are purposefully pale and transparent to direct the viewer's eye toward the center of thematic activity where the highest contrasts are concentrated. His delicate control of light and dark manipulates the viewer's attention towards the primary activity first, while the secondary story elements are delicately withdrawn into the background for later detection. This sophisticated use of color-design modulates the telling of the cover story. On top of everything, he presents that narrative within a sensational composition. Having genuinely mastered gorgeous colors, intriguing storytelling, and exciting composition, Rudy Belarski made great pulp art for his Munsey covers. His covers are the most tastefully colorful and the most graphically gorgeous of the entire genre. Each of the classic pulp artists brought something different to the mix, but Rudy was the one who brought a sophisticated color sense to the pulps. His brilliant ideas for arranging colors are breathtakingly beautiful. Clearly there were some giants of color-design in the slick magazines, none more so than Joseph Christian Leyendecker, but Belarski was the leading proponent of elegant color design in the pulps, and he learned this vital skill while working for Munsey under the influence of the elder illustrator, Emmett Watson.

Nevertheless, the essence of Belarski's genius was his powerful drawing skill, which initially saved him from a life in the coalmines. At the same time that he was mastering the use of color design, Belarski was busy drawing spectacular two-page interior story illustrations for many pulp magazines, including his memorable line art for aviation pulps.

Sometimes, though, the cost of success is higher than health can afford. Despite Rudy's astonishing fortitude and his Spartan training as a breaker boy, he was eventually overtaxed by his crushing workload of assignments. He resigned from his teaching duties at Pratt Institute in order to concentrate on his freelance work, and yet he still had too many assignments for his own good. By 1938, after years of rigorously scheduled studio work, Belarski developed acute intestinal pains from the stressful pressure of insurmountable deadlines. His doctor prescribed a prolonged period of rest, so Rudy decided to take six months off from work. He went camping in the wilderness, one hundred miles from the nearest railroad in snow-covered central Maine.

Rudy recounted, "Every man who has grown up with the love of the outdoors in his system dreams about being surrounded by winter as few people have known it, uncompromising and deadly. Yet I loved it! I loved every minute of the wild whiteness, the fierce purity, the bareness of the hardwood

Original cover illustration for *Detective Fiction Weekly*, April 8, 1939. Oil on canvas, 30" x 21"

trees and the color of the half-buried evergreens. Every such man dreams about the day when he himself will be part of such scenes. The dream generally starts way back with his first camping trip, the first .22, or with the excitement of trapping his first muskrat. Usually it includes a little log cabin on a running stream, or a quiet lake in some distant wilderness. I had visions of myself gliding effortlessly over miles of spruce-lined lakes and streams. With some of us it is a dream that has never been forgotten, and the urge to realize it is the driving force, which often keeps us going at jobs which might otherwise be unbearable. So for me the wilderness was something to love. It was my dream, and I was going to live it. I gave up my art career and my job as an art instructor in one of the finest schools in the country, and I was suddenly on a train heading for Greenville, Maine, on Moosehead Lake. Along with my other stuff I had a radio, a Winchester and a 16mm movie camera."

Inspired by Faustin Wirkus' documentary movie, *Voodoo,* Rudy decided to bring a movie camera to make a documentary film about his own daring adventures in the exotic frozen wilderness. Rudy's dream was also influenced by the famous ordeal of Admiral Byrd, who spent five months alone in Antarctica operating a weather station, which was described in his 1938 best-selling adventure autobiography, *Alone.* Against the advice of Rudy's wife and friends, he embarked on his complete escape from civilization. Alone, with only the barest essentials for survival, he disappeared into the wilderness. His friends feared they would never see him again.

Six months passed with no sign of Rudy. Finally a search party of Forest Rangers was dispatched to rescue him or recover his remains. Belarski was eventually found wandering in the snow, exhausted and disoriented. He later recalled his rescue, "That night, resting for a moment to look at the stars, I felt the same awe that man, since creation, has experienced in studying the sky, and reluctantly, I realized that to Nature my living or dying would not have the slightest meaning. For a moment, off in the distance, I thought I could hear the faint sound of someone chopping firewood. It was an oddly singular, lonely sound. The next day, to my amazement, I thought I heard dogs barking, then human voices. I thought maybe I was becoming "bushed" and had begun hearing things. I couldn't imagine anybody having a reason for coming into the wilderness this far. Then I saw them! Two men and a sled pulled by dogs. I suddenly felt shy at the strange sight of people. I was to learn later that they had come to look for me. It was some celebration. They brought along some 'tonic.' It was the greatest medicine in the world. They told me later that I talked and sang incessantly. Their coming was terrific good luck for me, though I felt bad that on my account others had to leave warm homes unnecessarily to suffer hardships of the trail."

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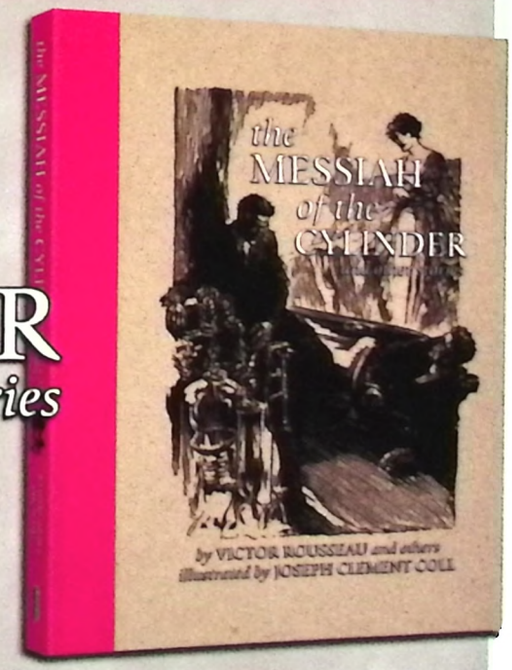

Serialized from June to September 1917 in Everybody's Magazine was the futuristic saga by Victor Rousseau 'The Messiah of the Cylinder'. Even more amazing were the illustrations by pen & ink master Joseph Clement Coll. Collected here in facsimile form, scanned right from the original pages, is the complete story, plus other short Everybody's features illustrated by Coll.

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◄ Original color sketch for unknown publication (presumably *Outdoor Life*), circa 1950s. Oil on canvas, 30" x 21"

Original cover illustration for *Outdoor Life*, November 1949

Outdoor Life, September 1949

Although weakened by starvation and exhausted from his ordeal, Belarski considered this adventure to be the highlight of his life. Thanks to his bringing back a truly remarkable film record of the entire event, he was able to relive the experience and to astonish his delighted visitors for the rest of his life with projections of the raw footage. Sadly, the movie was never developed for commercial release beyond a marvelous personal record of the artist's extraordinary adventure. Rudy later said, "It was a wonderful experience for me. Not only did I get my health back, but I fell in love with that way of life all over again." From then on, Rudy divided his time between New York and the woods of Maine or Labrador or Quebec. "I'd go into the office and get five or six sketches OK'd, and then I would go up into the mountains and paint them in a tent or a cabin. Way out in the backwoods." The completed illustrations would then be mailed to the publishers in cardboard boxes. Rudy continued to live this dual existence by lining up several assignments in New York and then heading north to paint them. Sometimes he would work intensely for several months and then retreat to Maine without any assignments. On those trips he would spend his time camping, hiking, fishing, and hunting. He only hunted for food and never for trophies. Belarski shared his passion for camping and fishing with several other friends who were also pulp cover artists, including Emery Clarke, R.G. Harris, and John W. Scott.

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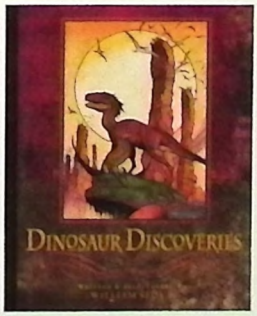

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The Phantom Detective, May 1936

Original illustration for *The Phantom Detective*, May 1948. Oil on canvas, 30" x 21"

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MURDER OVER BROOKLYN – THE FACTS ABOUT DISTRICT ATTORNEY O'DWYER AND THE SYNDICATE OF DEATH

Liberty, December 14, 1940

Emery Clarke was an excellent pulp cover artist. He painted some famous *Doc Savage* covers for Street & Smith, as well as covers for *Action Stories* and *North West Romances* for Fiction House. Like most pulp illustrators, Clarke also routinely submitted covers on speculation to *The Saturday Evening Post*. One day he had a cover accepted. It was published on April 15, 1939, and from then on, Emery Clarke was launched as a slick magazine illustrator. Walter Baumhofer and Ernest Chiriacka tried the same approach without success. Rudy Belarski also followed Clarke's example and painted his own speculative cover painting for *The Saturday Evening Post* and submitted it to the art editor, Ken Stuart. Rudy's effort was rejected with a left-handed compliment, when Stuart wrote back that he felt Belarski was "the perfect pulp adventure artist." When considered out of context, this statement sounds like a nice compliment, but when it was read on a rejection slip from *The Saturday Evening Post*, the unmistakable implication was that Belarski should not reach beyond his skill set. Nevertheless, Belarski did succeed in selling many freelance illustrations to other slick magazines.

While working in his cabin in the North woods of Maine, Belarski designed and built a snow tractor to carry himself and his boxed paintings to the closest town. "I once had to build myself a tractor to get me to the Post Office, which was about thirteen miles away. That's how I invented the first snowmobile! It used to take me down from the mountain into the Post Office, where I would send my paintings back to New York, packed in cardboard boxes." Neighbors marveled

Original cover illustration for *Black Book Detective*, May 1949. Oil on canvas, 25" x 18" ➤

Startling Stories, January 1940

Air War, Summer 1944

at Rudy's snow tractor. He continued to tinker with the design for several years, but before it was perfected, another industrial designer, who happened to be working along the same lines, patented the concept. Although Rudy never made a penny from his own snow tractor design, the remarkable project clearly illustrates the inventiveness of his creative mind and demonstrates his lifelong penchant for mechanics, which was first cultivated after the benevolent recognition of his creative abilities at the Hillside Coal & Iron Company.

After Pearl Harbor, every American was mobilized for war. Belarski was 41 years old and the Army accepted men for volunteer enlistment up to the age of 45. But he still had the same old flat feet that had kept him out of the previous war. The pulp industry was fully committed to the war effort with war bonds, war propaganda and war themes, so instead of active duty, Belarski jumped back into the "cockpit" of painting aviation pulps to supply the fervent public demand for heroic avenger aces.

Considering the amount of time that Rudy was isolated from his wife by working in his busy art studio or camping in the northeast woods, it was no surprise that he and Dolly decided to divorce. They had no children so the process was quick and uncomplicated. Rudy moved up to 310 North Avenue in New Rochelle, NY, an upstate suburb that had grown popular among artists. He joined many of his friends that had moved there from New York City, including Emery Clarke, R.G. Harris, Graves Gladney, Richard Lyon, and John W. Scott. His new art studio had many important illustrators as neighbors, including J.C. Leyendecker, Norman Rockwell, and Howard Chandler Christy. There was a spirit of camaraderie in the New Rochelle community of illustrators. According to R.G. Harris, "Though in competition with each other, we were always eager to lend a helping hand when help and encouragement was needed. When a desperate need for a model was called for, our group showed its immense acting ability by posing for each other. We were all hams." There were many fewer models available in the small town than in NYC, so the artists would pose for each other, or they would resort to other expediencies. According to Belarski, "When I moved to New Rochelle, I found out that many colleagues worked from photographs. They *had* to, because the girls were getting $25 an hour by that time." So Rudy also began to produce illustrations that were increasingly based on reference photos.

In May of 1942 the grand old man of American illustrators, James Montgomery Flagg, started the Artists for Freedom Committee to mobilize artists to contribute service to the nation in the war effort, under the sponsorship of the British

Thrilling Mystery, June 1943

Thrilling Detective, February 1947

Thrilling Detective, April 1948

Thrilling Detective, June 1948

Mystery Book, Spring 1948

G-Men Detective, March 1949

and American Ambulance Corps. The committee consisted of more than 500 artists, including Dean Cornwell, past President of the Society of Illustrators; James Montgomery Flagg, Chairman of the Artists for Freedom Committee; Charles Dana Gibson, national academician; and Howard Chandler Christy, Chairman of the USO (United Service Organizations). All of these artists had previously directed a similar mobilization of artists in the first World War. One of their first concerted efforts was to assemble a charity exhibition of 100 paintings at the Hotel Savoy Plaza to raise funds for the USO. Belarski joined the Artists for Freedom and contributed to this project.

The USO was created by a congressional charter in preparation for WW2 as a way to coordinate the spontaneous outpouring of public support for military personnel. The USO delivered a special American hometown brand of comfort, morale and recreational services. It was created as a private, nonprofit organization that was supported by the generosity of individuals and businesses. Besides producing their famous touring variety shows with Hollywood and radio entertainers like Bob Hope, the USO also provided basic daily services for men in uniform, like organized games, dances, home-cooked meals, discount sundries, mailing centers, and friendly conversations.

In April 1944, Rudy received a letter from his old adventurous pal, Faustin Wirkus. He had re-enlisted in the U.S. Marines as an aviation gunnery specialist. He had contracted a serious tropical illness and been shipped to the Brooklyn Naval Hospital for treatment. Rudy went to see him and brought along his sketchbook. After visiting for a while, Rudy began to draw a handsome portrait of his big blond buddy while Faustin described his undiminished desire for exotic manly adventures. As fate would have it, Faustin Wirkus never left that hospital ward, where he died a few months later. While sketching him, other patients wandered over on crutches and canes and leaned over Rudy's shoulder to watch and ask questions. They gathered around making jokes and silly remarks to tease Faustin, but eventually most of them asked to have their own portraits drawn. A gracious nurse told Rudy about a remarkable USO sketch artist program that visited hospital wards where the wounded were too ill to attend a musical theater camp show. Rudy had seen enough to realize this was the most worthwhile thing he could do for the servicemen who had sacrificed so much. They sincerely appreciated the entertainment of posing for his portraits, so he volunteered for the project. He went to the USO headquarters in Times Square and presented his professional credentials as a member of the Artists for Freedom. He filled out endless forms in trip-

***Pfc. George W. Ray, Co.F. 413th Inf. 104th Div.*, December 10, 1944. Charcoal on paper** ➤

licate, listed all identifying marks, and was fingerprinted. After receiving his policy training, Rudy was awarded his USO pin as an official one-man camp show. At first he was scheduled to visit hospitals in the New York region. Each one would have a big billboard near the entrance listing the USO and Red Cross activities, including, "Rudolph Belarski, Artist Illustrator to sketch you. Ward Patients Only. Today. It's Fun! It's Free!"

One week after D-Day, Belarski received an itinerary for his overseas assignment. Before his departure, he prepared a last batch of pulp covers for the Thrilling Group and then sailed for "destination unknown" in a shipping convoy through the treacherous U-boat-infested North Atlantic and arrived twenty days later in England, where he joined the service corps and entertainers that worked to comfort wounded soldiers in British hospitals. Belarski was assigned to the famous London Hospital, which was surrounded by the city's chaotic aftermath of the barbaric Blitz. The following article appeared in the *N.Y. Times*, December 1, 1944—"USO Portraits for GI's":

> "Having his portrait sketched by a United Service Organizations artist can do wonders in picking up the spirit of a GI in a hospital. It provides entertainment for the subject of the portrait and others in the ward. The knowledge that the portrait is being sent to the folks back home is a great heart-warmer too. Doctors find that the portrait sketching has a great medical and therapeutic value. It speeds patient's recovery by cheering them. USO camp shows' portrait sketching has sent 180 illustrators and portrait painters into hospitals in America and abroad. They have made a quarter of a million sketches of wounded service men. The sketching program was started in April and will continue next year. There are 200,000 veterans in hospitals and 1,500,000 service men on active duty. They will need USO. Give to the New York USO campaign to raise their funding goal of $2,750,000."

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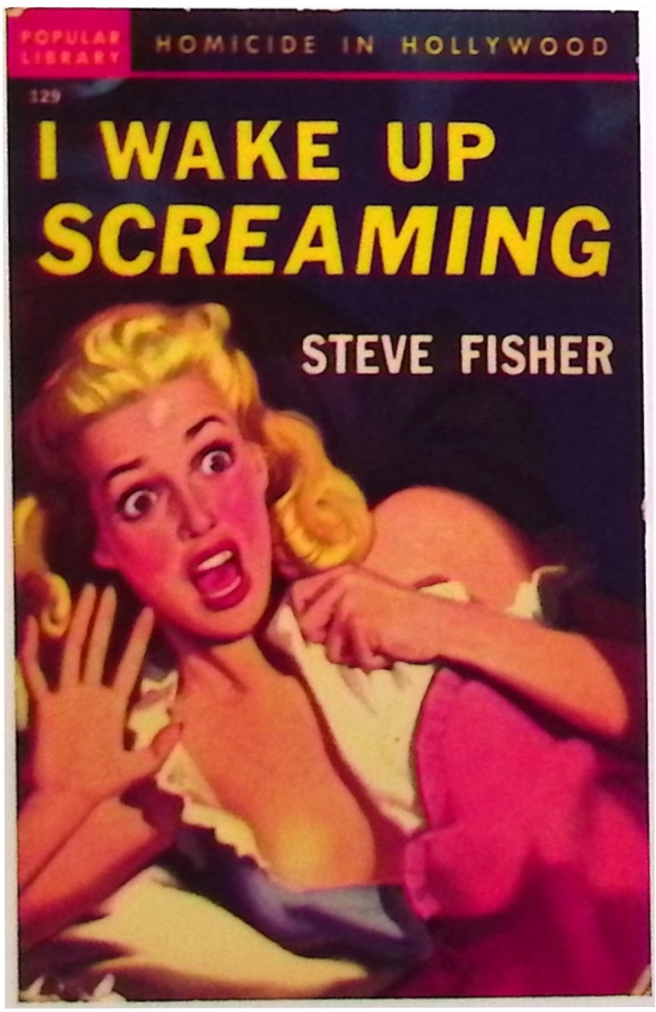
Belarski dedicated himself to this extraordinary project for the duration of the war in Europe. He made over two thousand drawings of American servicemen, many of them not much older than boys. They wore rumpled grey pajamas and maroon bathrobes that were marked "MD USA" (Medical Department, United States Army), which the boys claimed stood for "Many Die, U Shall Also." At the end of each week, Rudy presented the Special Service Officer with all the drawings, each with an attached card with the name, rank, and serial number of the subject. Also included on the card was the name and address of the person chosen to receive the drawing. The Special Service Officer would forward all of the drawings to the USO in New York, where they were mailed off in a large tube to each designated wife, mother, or sweetheart. On April 28, 1945, one week before V-E Day, Belarski finally returned home after a twelve-day voyage on the *M.S. John Ericsson*, from Southampton, England to New York City. Several other members of the "USO Camp Shows, Inc." accompanied him on the return crossing. Belarski is listed on the ship's passenger list as "single."

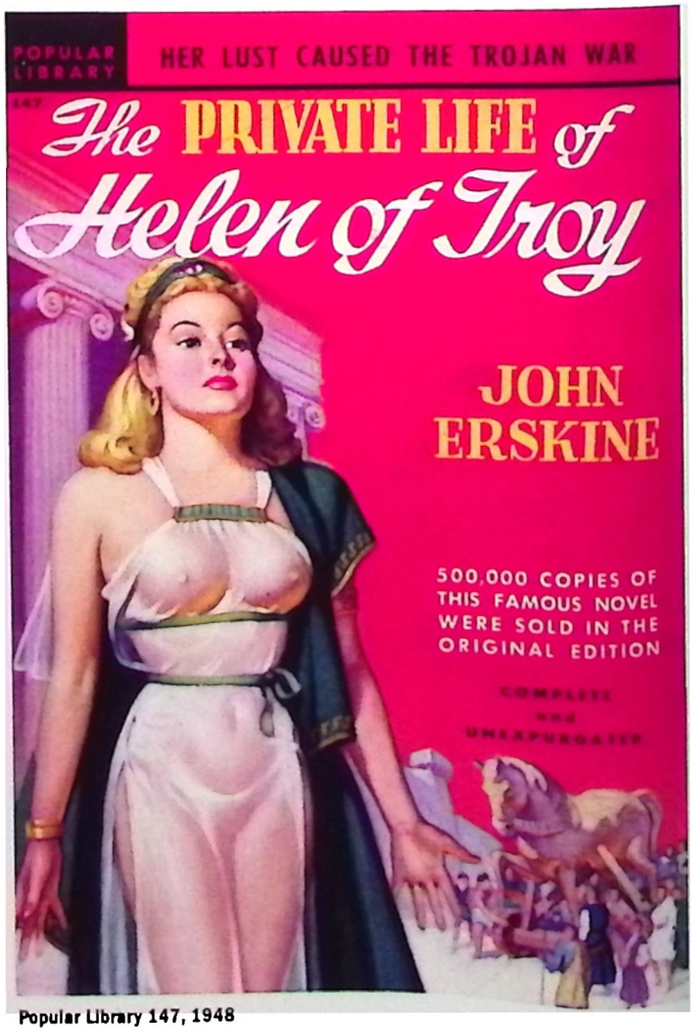
On November 15, 1945, Faustin Wirkus died in the Brooklyn Naval Hospital. There was a grand memorial service in Dupont, PA, and a testimonial dinner, which was co-chaired by Ted and Rudy Belarski, with all of Dupont's civic leaders in attendance to commemorate the passing of the town's most famous son.

After the war, Belarski resumed his illustration career as the top cover artist with his old associates from Thrilling Magazines. He worked steadily and exclusively for them from 1945 until 1950 to produce most of the covers for *Black Book Detective, Popular Detective, Phantom Detective, G-Men Detective*, and *Thrilling Detective*. A new development in Belarski's graphic design is distinguished at this time by his graceful facility in rendering a bold central character. The formal anatomy of these subjects closely resembles the distorted perspective of a camera lens. Other pulp artists were resorting to this same expedient, perhaps in response to financial pressures from the dwindling market. Earle Bergey and George Gross both made pulp covers at this time that feature central characters that appear to have been traced from photos of posed models. Rudy Belarski rearranged his staged photos into a composition that is exciting enough to transcend the artless mediocrity of a snapshot. Belarski's dramatic personae are playacting in a world of masterful synthetic design. His last original pulp cover worked its way through the production machinery and was *2 Detective Mystery Novels*, released in Winter of 1951.

The Thrilling Group of pulp magazines came from Standard Publications, which was owned by Ned Pines. During the war, Pines had started publishing Popular Library paperbacks. These often used a trademark logo of a pine tree. Pines produced these books with the same art editor that had made his pulps, Churchill Ettinger, who in turn brought along his best pulp cover artist, Rudy Belarski, who painted fifty covers for Popular Library. Most of them were powerfully composed with a prominently featured buxom woman.

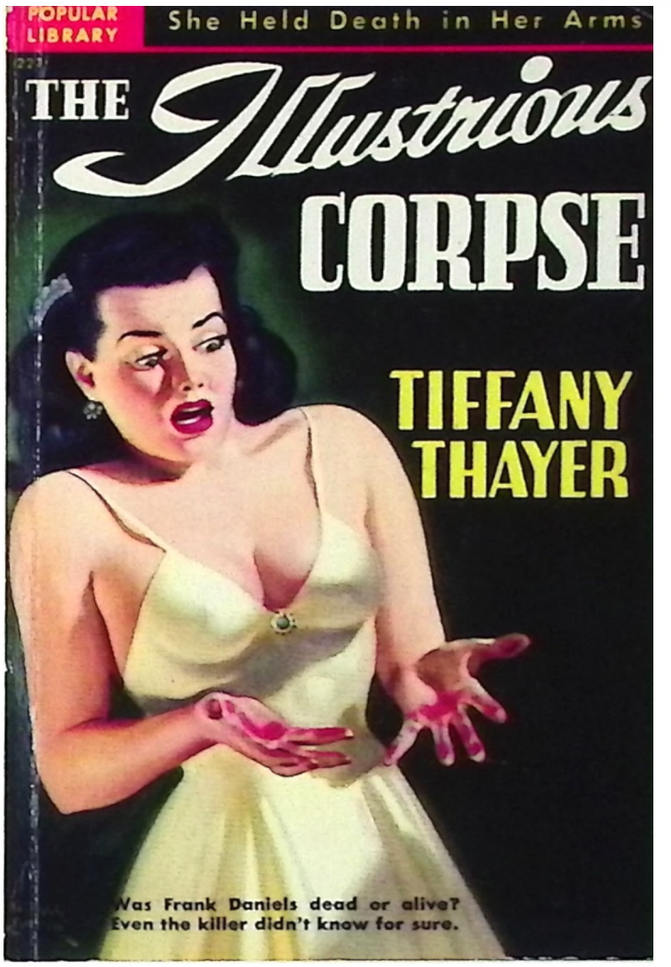


Popular Library 129. 1947


POPULAR LIBRARY
HER LUST CAUSED THE TROJAN WAR
147
The PRIVATE LIFE of Helen of Troy
JOHN ERSKINE
500,000 COPIES OF THIS FAMOUS NOVEL WERE SOLD IN THE ORIGINAL EDITION

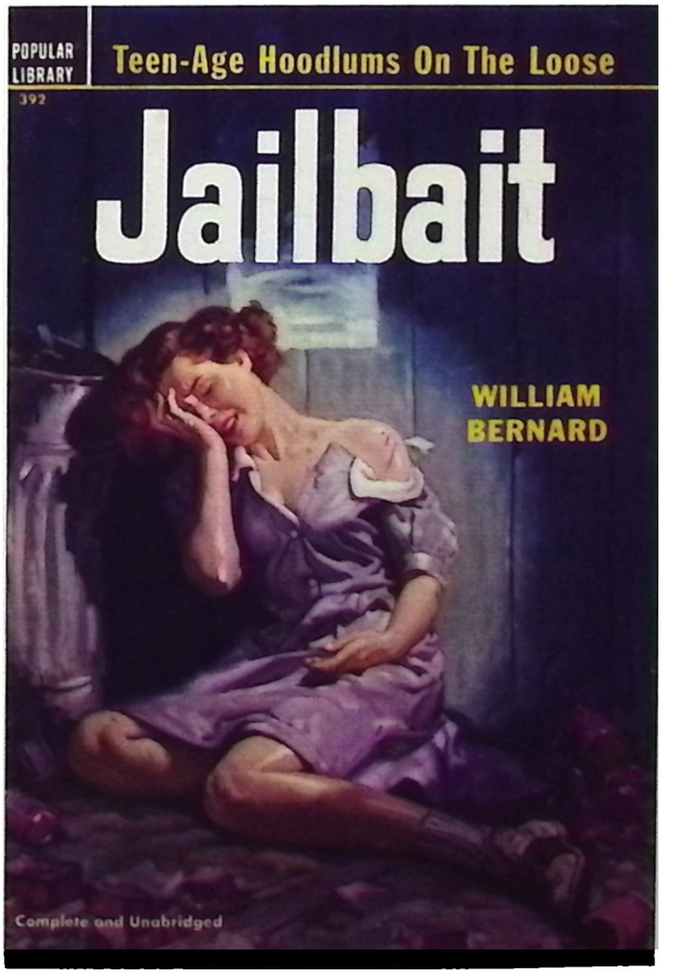
Popular Library 147, 1948

Popular Library 173, 1949



Popular Library 227, 1949

Popular Library 382, 1951



Popular Library 392, 1951

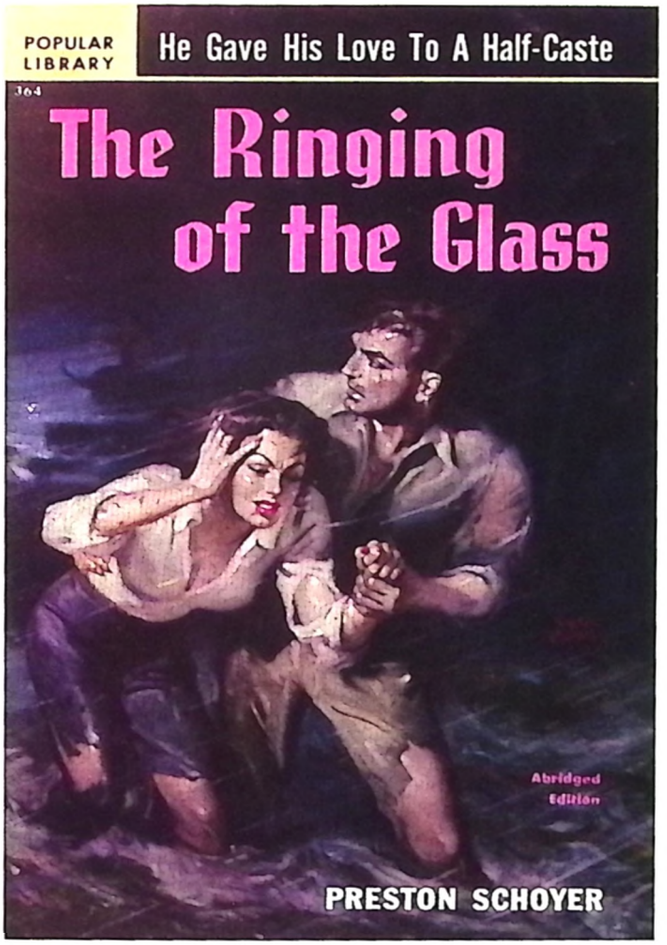
Popular Library 334, 1951

Popular Library 379, 1951

Belarski's innovative design of blatant sexuality influenced the look of Popular Library's entire line. According to cultural historian Piet Schreuders in *Paperbacks, U.S.A.*, "It is impossible to think of Rudolph Belarski without thinking of Popular Library, and it is equally impossible to imagine Popular Library without remembering Rudolph Belarski. He was a giant in his profession."

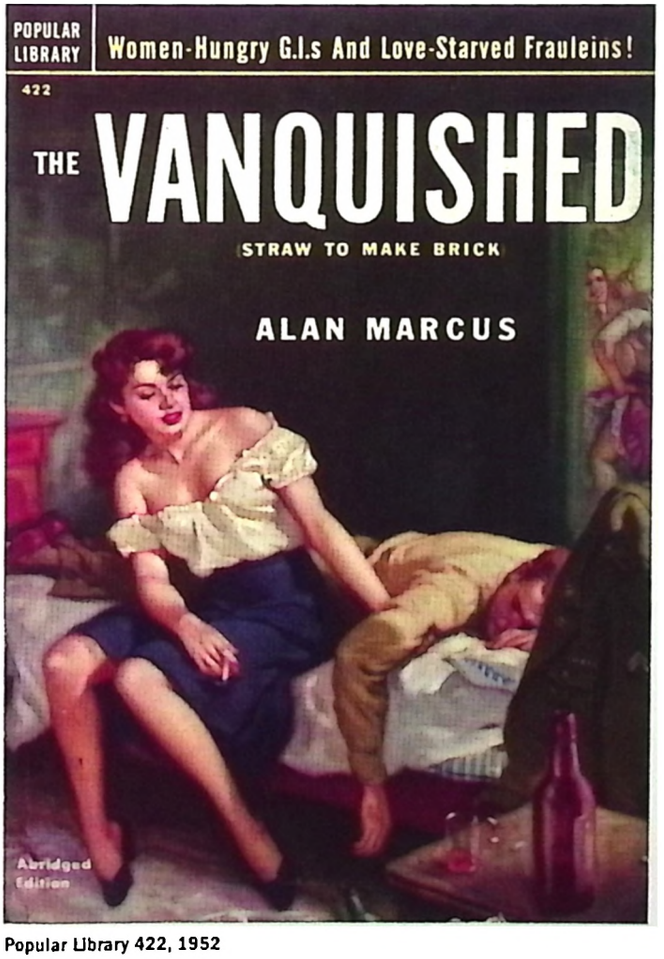
Belarski's cover paintings for paperbacks in this period relied on carefully staged and costumed models that had genuine theatrical talent. Rudy used a photography studio, Fashiongraph, Inc., to shoot his reference photographs of hired professional models. His typical villain is Bill Magner, the professional model who famously posed as *The Shadow* for both Rafael DeSoto and George Rozen. The beautiful statuesque blond who posed for most of Rudy's paperback covers was named Gladys "Laddie" Bell, or at least that *was* her name until Rudy married her and she became Laddie Belarski. Although the artist was obviously inspired by her outstanding beauty, he remained unmoved by her attempts at homebound domestication. Rudy was unwilling to renounce his free-spirited ways. His unusual schedule of alternating periods of intensive studio work with pastoral retreats had grown into a settled routine that was better suited to the lifestyle of a single bachelor. Their marriage lasted less than one year, when they mutually agreed to a divorce that was filed under the accommodating terms of a court of law in Sarasota, Florida.

By 1952, Ned Pines wanted to change the look of Popular Library to reflect the fashionable look of mainstream corporate advertising design. He hired a new art director, who openly acknowledged his contempt for Belarski's style of cover art when he later recalled, "They had been hiring pulp artists to paint all of their covers, but I couldn't stand all that pulp stuff!" Instead of receiving automatic approval for several preliminary designs for new book covers, Belarski was suddenly being asked to continuously resubmit revised preliminaries, until the end result was a cover painting that had no connection with his original inspiration. This time-consuming revision process made it impossible for Belarski to remain in the isolation of his backwoods studio. The mainstream paperback industry had outgrown its appreciation for his personal artistic vision and was instead demanding that he conform to the new art director's prescribed corporate image. After a distinguished career as a top paperback cover artist, Rudy Belarski felt that the growing interference of marketing specialists had complicated his creative process to an intolerable degree. At the age of 52, Rudy was too much of a rugged individualist to accept work as an anonymous assembly line "breaker boy." He had nothing but scorn for most art directors, claiming, "They tied you down so much, and I didn't feel *free!*" He quit the paperbacks and looked for freelance jobs in any other illustration market where he would be free to paint in his own style.

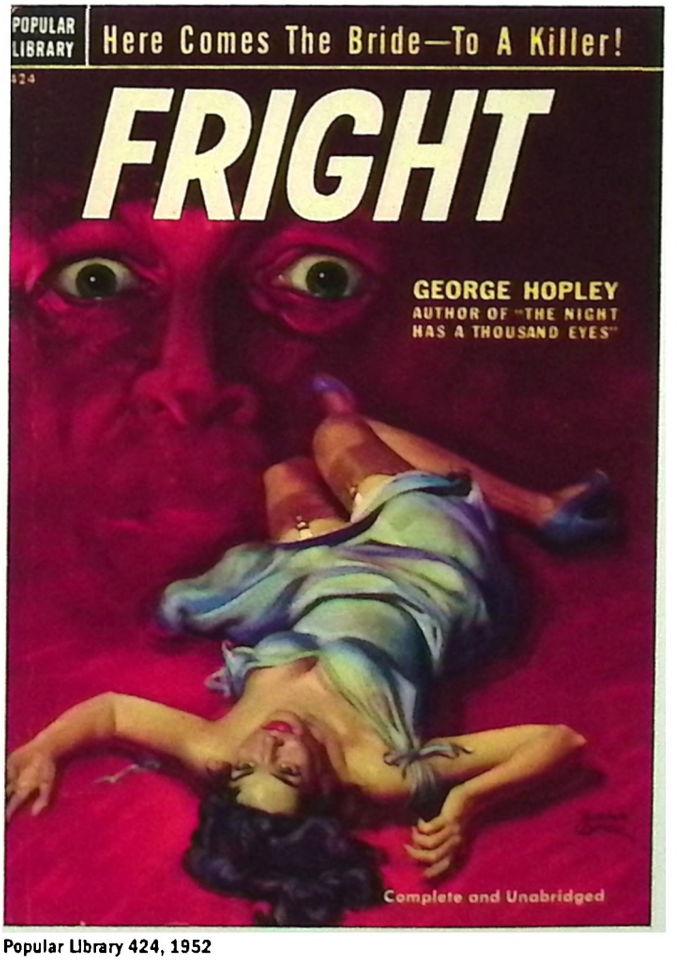


Popular Library 364, 1951

Popular Library 365, 1951



Popular Library 422, 1952



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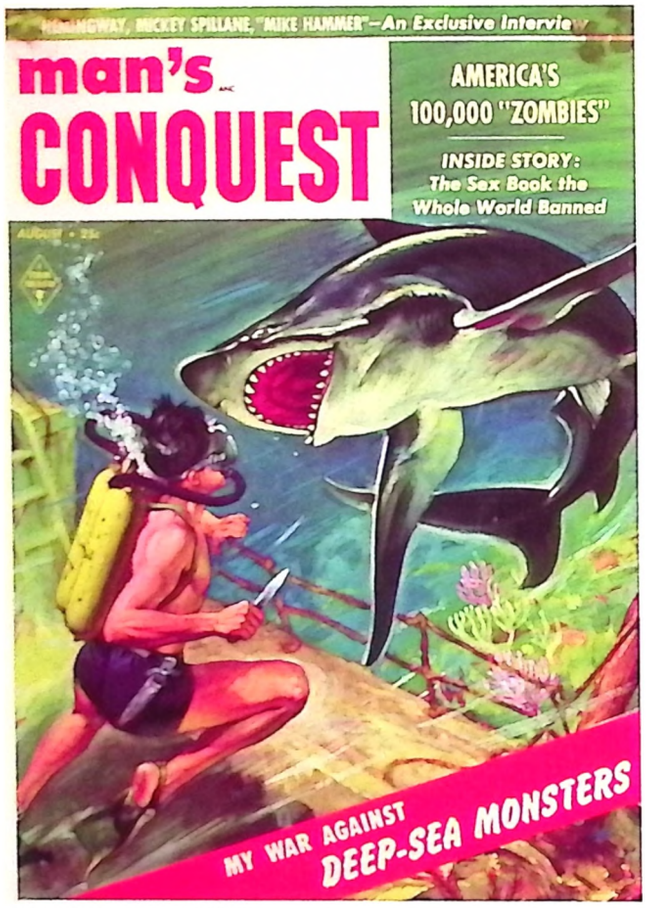


Man's Conquest, August 1955

Men True Adventure, November 1956

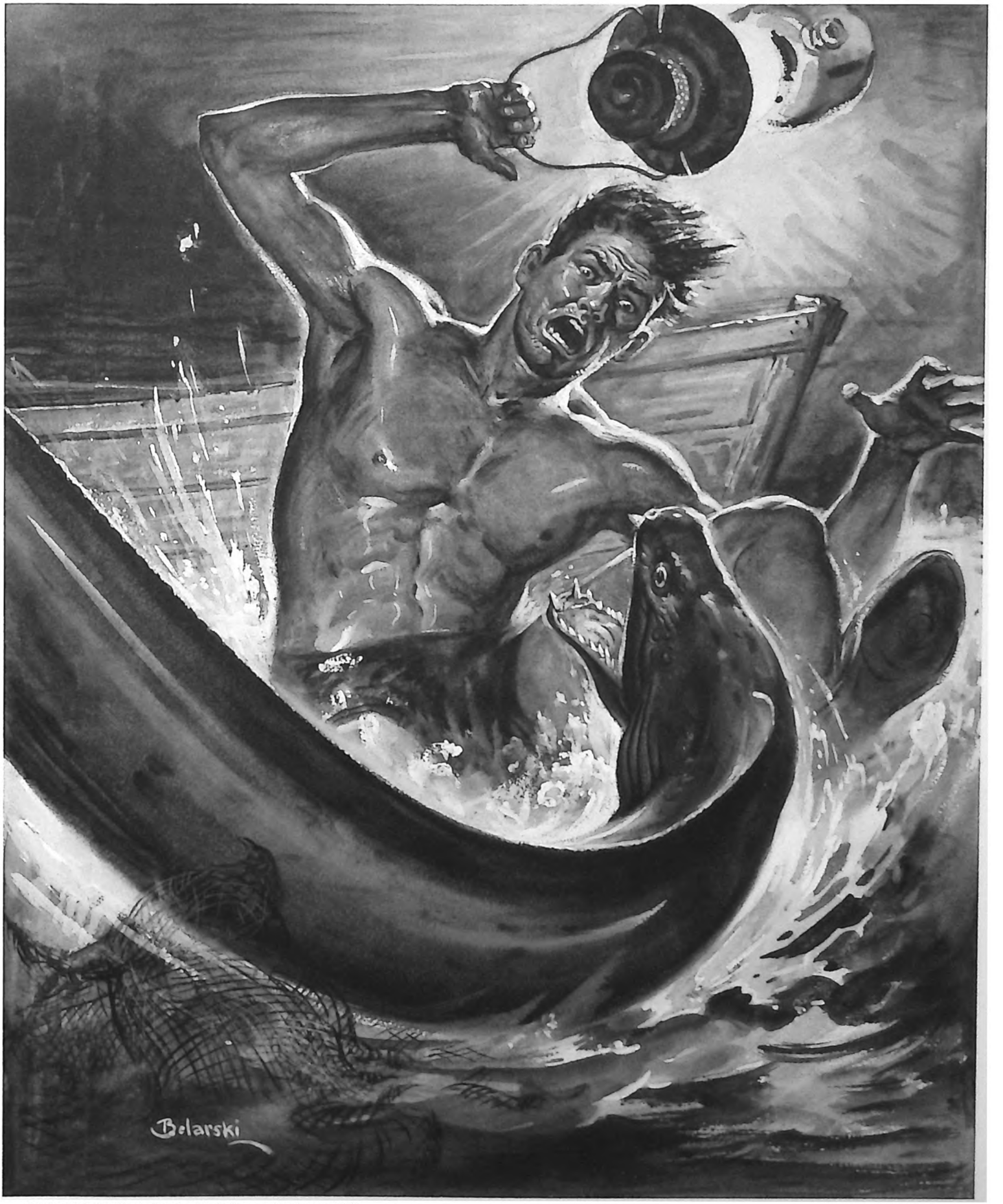
After leaving the field of mainstream publishing, Rudy began to do freelance work for subculture publishers who produced digest magazines, like *Future Science Fiction* and Venus Books. He also did work for men's adventure magazines, where he competed for $200 cover jobs with several other unemployed pulp artists, including Norman Saunders, Rafael DeSoto, A. Leslie Ross, George Gross, and Clarence Doore. To establish his expertise in the field of manly adventure, Belarski re-examined his near death experience in the snowbound northern woods of Maine in 1938. He wrote and illustrated a personal account of those exploits, entitled "I Went In Alone." It was published in the January 1953 issue of the men's adventure magazine *Cavalier*.

Cavalier, January 1953, p16-17

Over the following decade, Belarski continued to regularly contribute black and white story illustrations painted in gouache, as well as a few color cover paintings, to men's adventure magazines such as *Argosy*, *Adventure*, *For Men Only*, *Outdoor Life*, *Man's Illustrated*, *Man's Conquest*, *Man's World*, *Men*, *Stag*, and *True Adventure*. Within a short time, Rudy Belarski was recognized as one of the most important illustrators in the adventure magazine business. But despite his prominence, the fact remained that these magazines were cheap publications that paid very little. Belarski needed to find an additional source of income.

As New Rochelle became an increasingly swanky suburb of NYC, more and more artists were forced to look elsewhere for affordable housing. Belarski joined the exodus with many of his friends, who were relocating to the Westport, Connecticut area, such as Emery Clarke, Tommy Lovell, R.G. Harris and John W. Scott.

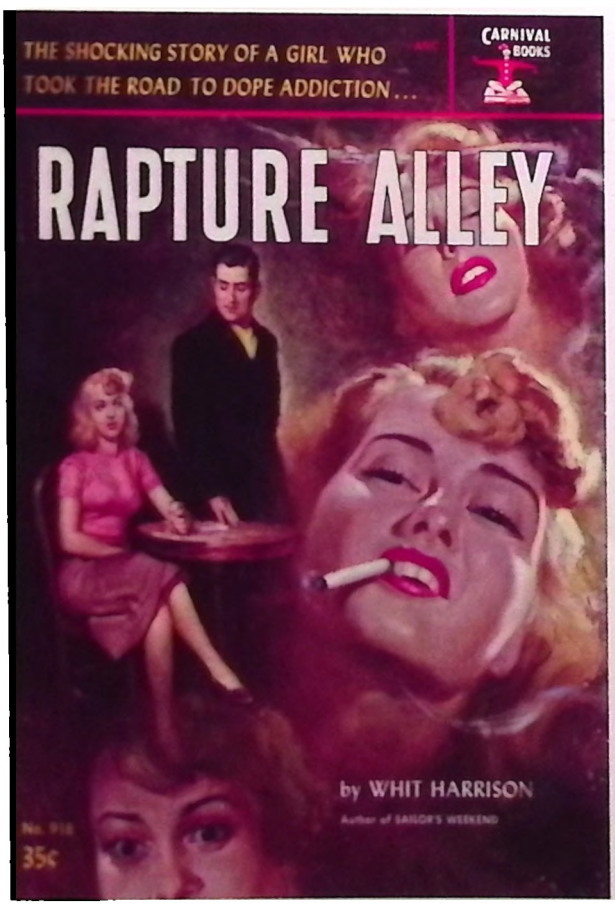
Albert Dorne was a great illustrator, a clever businessman, and a charming guy. Dorne was widely considered the wealthiest illustrator in America, thanks to his business sense to concentrate on the lucrative field of advertising. Dorne moved to Westport after the war and started the Famous Artists School. He designed his correspondence school to exceed its model and predecessor, Art Instruction Inc. (formerly, The Federal Schools of Minneapolis). Several combined factors helped to make his new art correspondence school quickly rise to the top of the industry—Dorne's brilliant advertising campaign, with an iconic photograph of Norman Rockwell, along with



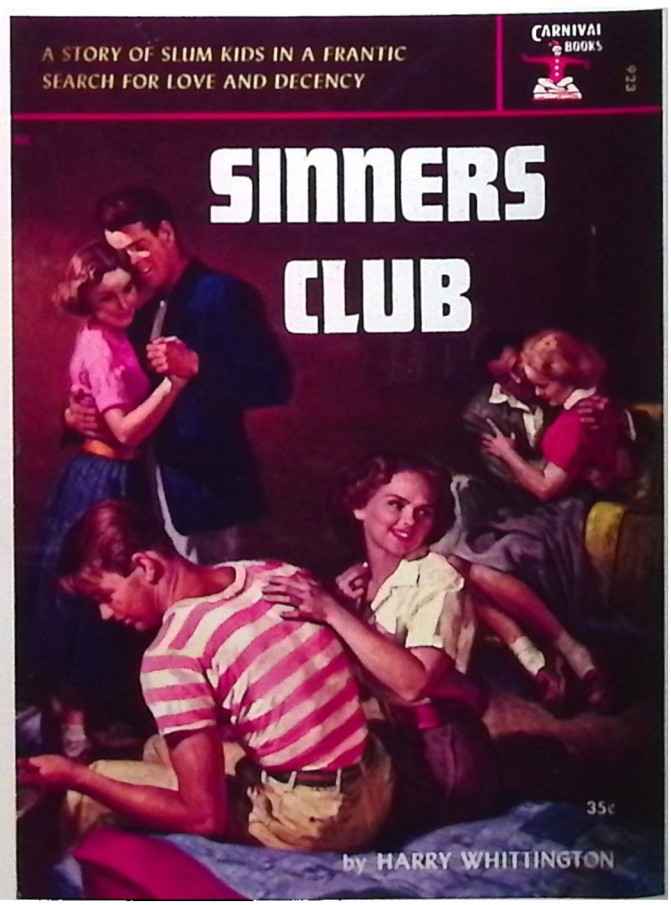
Original interior illustration for *Man's Conquest*, February 1956

his company's proximity to New York City, and Dorne's personal friendship with so many famous illustrators. Dorne recruited a group of faculty members that included Rockwell, Stevan Dohanos, Robert Fawcett, Harold von Schmidt, Al Parker, Austin Briggs, and Jon Whitcomb. The school offered courses in painting, illustration and cartooning. Each course consisted of twenty-four successive lessons that were each mailed to the student upon completion. Finished assignments were returned to the school, where a professional artist would critique each submittal and send detailed suggestions back to the student. The price for the two-year course was $300, payable in monthly installments, plus another $11.55 for the basic art supplies. Famous Artists School focused primarily on representational art skills because a solid grounding in the basics was teachable, and also because it was what the public wanted to learn. In 1957 Rudy Belarski joined the faculty of the Famous Artists School. He was only required to report to work a few days each week, where he was given a stack of art assignments to critique. Every time he entered the offices, he would flirt with the school's lovely telephone receptionist and ask her out to dinner. Besides answering telephones, Barbara "Bobbie" Jean Holzhausen had been a Radio City Music Hall Rockette, the most famous kickline in show business. She was also a trained dancer and dance instructor, who owned and operated a dance studio in Westport. At first she dismissed Rudy as just another wolf, but his persistent good humor and charm finally paid off. Three years later they were married. Rudy and Bobbie Belarski had their honeymoon on Ocracoke Island, North Carolina, where for the first time in his life, Rudy learned how to drive. Bobbie taught him as they practiced driving along the vast barren stretches of the Cape Hatteras Seashore Highway. Rudy had always been a car enthusiast, but having lived near a convenient mass transit system for most of his life, he had never needed to learn how to drive until moving in Westport. Although Bobbie still did all of the driving, Rudy became fascinated by the newest developments in car engines, and his conversation was peppered with such car-savvy phrases as "super turbo thrust" and "three-speed synchromesh transmission."

Rudy and Bobbie moved into her parent's home in Westport at 9 West Parish Road, which was the same home where she had been raised. They lived with Bobbie's mother, who liked Rudy very much. There was a considerable age difference between the bride and groom, but it had not seemed as much at the time of their wedding, mainly because Rudy had claimed he was only 40 years old. Bobbie was surprised to later discover that he had actually been 59. She jested, "No wonder he and Mom always seemed to have so much in common!" Rudy had always been a talented portrait painter, and his USO experiences had allowed him to perfect those skills, so he began to supplement their family income by accepting several portrait commissions. His full-length portrait of Bobbie in her dance costume was one of his last and most impressive paintings. According to artist and co-worker at the Famous



Carnival Books 918, 1953



Carnival Books 923, 1953

Original cover illustration for *Streets of Paris*, Original Novels 748, 1953. Oil on canvas, 25.5" x 19" ➤

Nurses' Quarters
Belarski

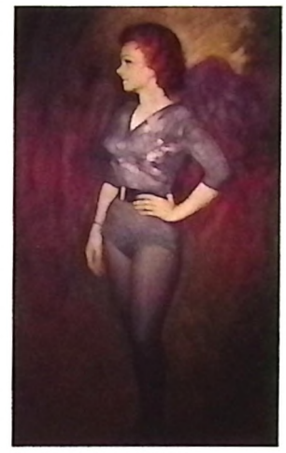
Original cover illustration for *Wayward Nurse*, Venus Books 162, 1953. Oil on canvas, 25.5" x 19"

◀ Original cover illustration for *Male Ward*, Venus Books 170, 1954. Oil on canvas, 25.5" x 19"

Original cover illustration for *River Boat Girl*, Original Novels 740, 1954. Oil on canvas, 25.5" x 19"

Original cover illustration for unknown publication, 1954. Oil on canvas, 25.5" x 19"

Artists School, Walt Reed, "Rudy was a man of strong opinions. He had a very low opinion of Picasso, who he considered a fraud and Public Enemy #1, but that was the way he viewed avant-garde painting in general." The illustrator Howell Dodd was the Famous Artists School Director of Education at that time and recalled, "Rudy has always demonstrated unusual mastery of figure drawing and painting. He is a superb craftsman and is a firm believer in the traditional values of sound academic training—with no shortcuts. He has nothing but scorn for much of the so-called avant-garde work that has fascinated the art market for a number of years. He feels that most of that work has lost traditional values and standards and has led only to confusion and even charlatanism."



Bobbie Belarski, 1964

Rudy still preferred to be alone with nature. He built his own eighteen-foot cabin cruiser by hand, and christened her "The Helen" after his sister. He loved to fish from his boat in the Atlantic Ocean. He ribbed other sportsmen who were afraid to sail out into deeper waters away from the sight of land. Rudy preferred to fish on the open waters of the deep sea, but instead of angling for sport fish like marlin, sailfish and sharks, he baited his lines for edible fish such as flounders, bluefish, and black fish. Rudy continued to enjoy the restorative solitude of woodland retreats, and in 1966 he painted "The Ideal Camp Site" in honor of his eternal longing for a rustic paradise.

Belarski retired from teaching at the Famous Artists School in 1972, and then stopped painting. With no stimulus from demanding publishers and no clients or patrons, there was no inner compulsion for Rudy to continue painting. According to his wife, he mostly fidgeted around with machines out in his garage or down in his basement workshop, in the company of his favorite pet, a cat named Sandy. Rudy spent his retirement years in his dark, cramped basement filled with greasy machine parts, while contentedly tinkering with boat parts, pumps, and mechanical refinements for his unique snow-tractor. All of his original paintings had been kept by his publishers and given away to readers as contest awards or as inducements to distributors. The only thing remaining from Belarski's life work was a collection of color press proofs, which he had retrieved from the art editors of each publishing house after they had served their purpose in the color correction process. One day, an enterprising enthusiast visited the retired artist and took away the entire collection of Belarski proof sheets, claiming that he would write a book about him. The unknown "fan" was never heard from again.

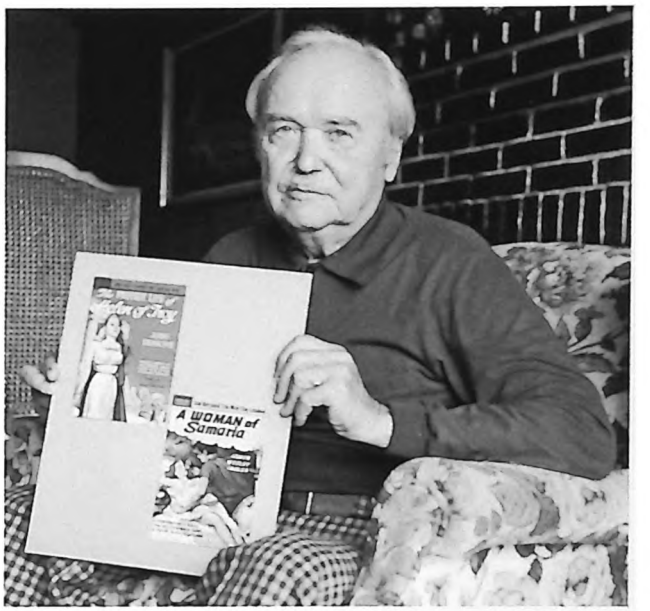
Rudy was in general good health when chronic inflammation of his small intestine developed into painful colitis. He entered the Norwalk Hospital for emergency treatment and unexpectedly died on December 24th, 1983. Internment was at Willow Brook Cemetery, 395 Main Street in Westport, CT.

***The Ideal Camp Site*, 1965. Oil on canvas**

Original cover illustration for *Passion Is a Woman*, Venus Books 152, 1952. Oil on canvas, 30" x 21"

Original cover illustration for *Orbit* #3, 1953. Oil on canvas, 25" x 25"

Rudolph Belarski's studio, 1981. Photo by Piet Schreuders



Rudolph Belarski with paperback proof sheets, 1981. Photo by Piet Schreuders

According to his friend, the aviation artist William Feeny, "Rudy Belarski was the Dean of the Aviation Illustrators. Of all the famous artists I have known, he was the one who exerted the greatest influence on me. He generously shared the wisdom of long experience, which showed me how far I still had to travel, and yet he always had words of encouragement, which made the distant goal seem hopefully attainable. His professional success aside, he was a man of true inner quality. In times of stress he was as solid as a rock. In fact, I often thought of him in terms of the old-fashioned family doctor stereotype. Although he could look very stern when deep in thought, his eyes twinkled and the crow's feet around them crinkled whenever I said something that tickled his funny bone. His quiet nature was not given to self-centered indulgence or loud egotism. Despite his impressive career accomplishments, I never heard him boast. After all, this man had been there before. In a highly demanding and fiercely competitive profession, Rudy Belarski had done it all."

According to the artist's surviving wife, Bobbie Belarski, "Rudy was a rugged individualist and a real sweetheart!"

We will never know what went on in Rudy's mind when he was isolated by the intense concentration of his activities, such as picking slate chips from a coal chute, picking wild berries in the Poconos, backpacking through the wilderness, fishing on his boat, working on doohickeys in his basement tool shop, or painting some of the most stunning examples of classic illustration art that America ever produced; but all the evidence indicates that it was full of perseverance, invention, charm, and playfulness. Belarski brought an impressive level of professional discipline to everything he did, which made his work for the lower-paying fields of illustration all the more outstanding. There was no general rule for how artists should deal with the limitations of commercial illustration—it just depended on how their personal qualities equipped each artist to respond to those limitations. Some artists depended on the limits, while other artists ignored them or tolerated them; but Belarski excelled in defiance of those limitations. His tendency to work intensely hard while suffering chronic symptoms of stress comes from a defiant streak that was determined to proudly surmount all obstacles with dignity. That artistic strength came from his stunningly beautiful graphic designs, which made their first assertive appearance in 1916 as graffiti on a wall of the Hillside Coal & Iron Co., in Pittston, PA. Belarski rarely had the time to linger over his brushstrokes to savor the joy of painting, but there is a playful mastery in his thrilling graphic designs. Perhaps he had a god-given talent for tasteful decoration, but the impressive flights of fancy in his color-schemes have a defiant spirit of liberty that seems to cry out, "You can't keep me down!" His remarkable art radiates a joyous world of artificiality. When Rudolph Belarski was inventing exciting compositions for his characters and coordinating light and dark to control our gaze, and arranging startling color schemes, he was enjoying the pure fun of synthetic design. To think that such mastery has flourished from the coal mining depths of his childhood inspires admiration for the irrepressible creativity of mankind.

Some of that creativity recently caught the eyes of ten million viewers when Rudolph Belarski's paintings were featured on the popular TV show, *Law & Order*. In one scene, his pulp paintings appear on display at the Brooklyn Museum of Art and were woven into the detective mystery plot of an episode about a pulp fiction novelist's death. Once again, he confirmed the ancient truism, *ars longa, vita brevis*, which could be translated in this context to mean "great illustration art transcends the limits of pop culture."

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David Saunders is a noted pulp historian and long-time contributor to this magazine. Check out his websites at www.PulpArtists.com, and www.NormanSaunders.com.

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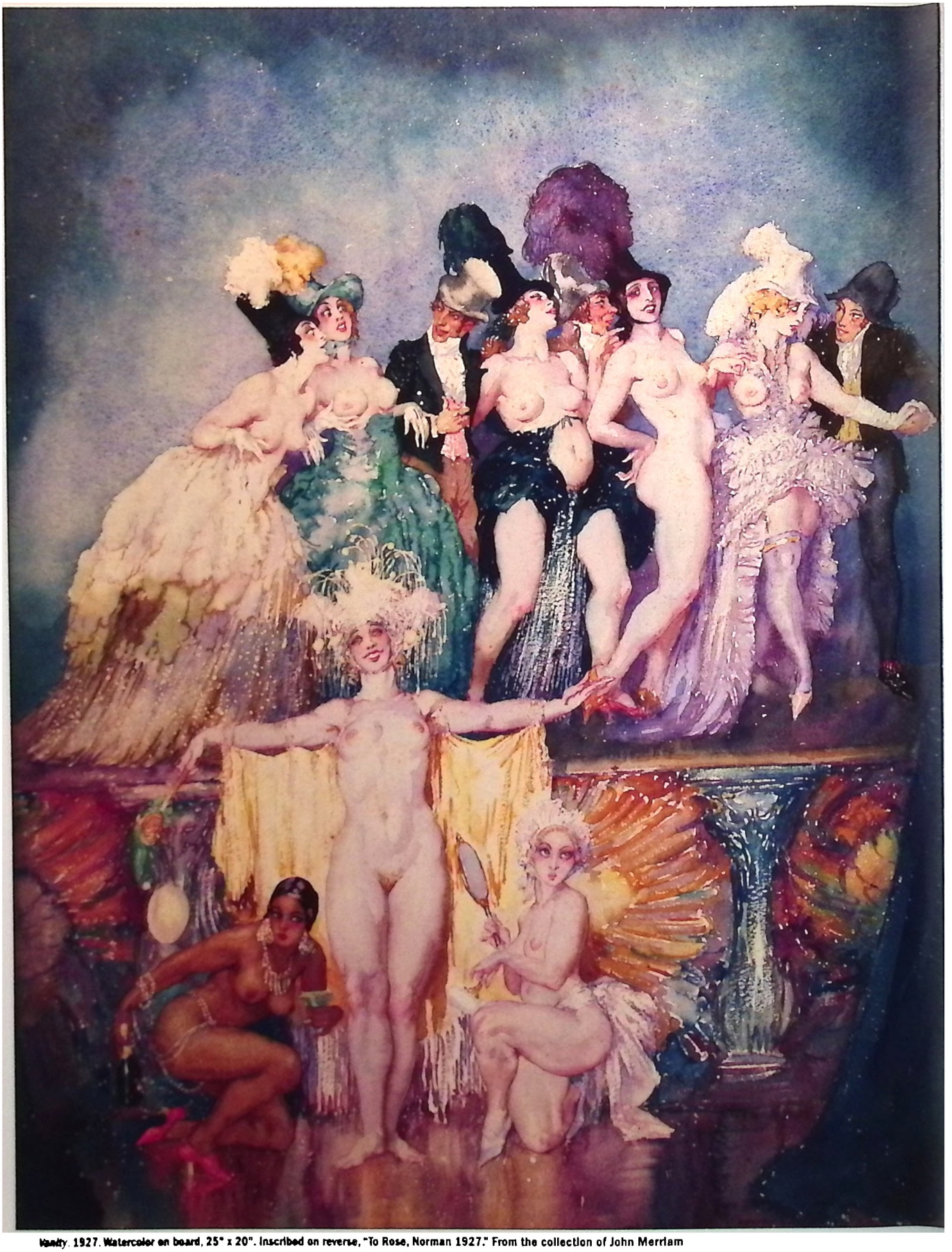


Vanity. 1927. Watercolor on board, 25" x 20". Inscribed on reverse, "To Rose, Norman 1927." From the collection of John Merriam

Norman Lindsay, 1936

Norman Lindsay in America

by Louis Irmo

It wasn't simple wanderlust that brought the extraordinary Australian artist Norman Lindsay (1879-1969) to our American shores. He was fleeing the "mob imbecility" and the outraged "wowsers" when he stepped aboard the Aorangi, which left Sydney on July 23, 1931. He feared that they wanted him imprisoned upon seeing the nudity in the just published Special Norman Lindsay Number of *Art in Australia* (December 1930.) In a letter to Leslie Meller from June 1931, Lindsay noted that the editors of *Art in Australia* had "been hauled before a police court," and he was "expecting any moment a police raid on my home." In fact, he was so worried about possibly being brought up on obscenity charges, as Jane Lindsay recalls in her illuminating *Portrait of Pa*, that he cut up two great large oils that hung in his drawing room of Witches' Sabbaths, that featured naked witches and demons tumbling through the sky. Coming on the heels of his novel *Redheap* having just been banned the previous year, he felt he had no choice but to leave "the best country in the world, were it not for the wowsers." So picture a slender man (he considered eating a waste of time), medium height, thin brown hair combed forward, well dressed, probably wearing a hat, animated, accompanied by his wife Rose, stepping off the ocean liner into America's welcoming arms.

After all, he was no stranger here.

Already well known for many years in his native country for his work in the *Sydney Bulletin* and *The Lone Hand*, his debut performance here was in *Harper's Weekly*, and had consisted of back to back appearances at Christmas time—the time of year when magazine publishers usually make a special effort to include more art and fiction in celebration of the holiday. *Harper's Weekly*, the first issue of which was published January 3, 1857, along with periodicals like *Century* and *Scribner's*, had become established in middle and upper class households as the cultured reading of the day. Although not yet his mature work, his illustrations in the December 10, 1910 issue of *Harper's* are immediately recognizable as from his hand, and stood out against a background of the other impressive artwork found in this magazine. The other artists appearing ranged from Peter Newell to Anton Otto Fischer, from Paul Stahr to John Newton Howitt, all of whom would later become well known and respected. Lindsay's four pen and inks and one pencil drawing were reproduced as a full page treatment for "Homeward Bound," rousing, seafaring verse enhanced by his typically full of life depictions of sailors at work on board ship, and chasing ladies on shore leave. In the Christmas 1911 issue his work, again presented full page, were three fine drawings accompanying a Richard LeGallienne poem "The Girls of Spain." His mastery of black and white illustration is not only

Homeward Bound

A

CAPSTAN CHANTEY

DECORATIONS AND DRAWINGS
BY
NORMAN LINDSAY

Our cargo's all in and our ballast's all out—
Good-bye, fare-ye-well!
Good-bye, fare-ye-well!
So now we'll raise that good old shout,
Hurrah! me lads, we're homeward bound.

"So now we'll raise that good old shout"

Our anchors weighed, our sails unfurled –
Good-bye, fare-ye-well!
Good-bye, fare-ye-well!
We're bound to plough the watery world,
Don't ye see, we're homeward bound.

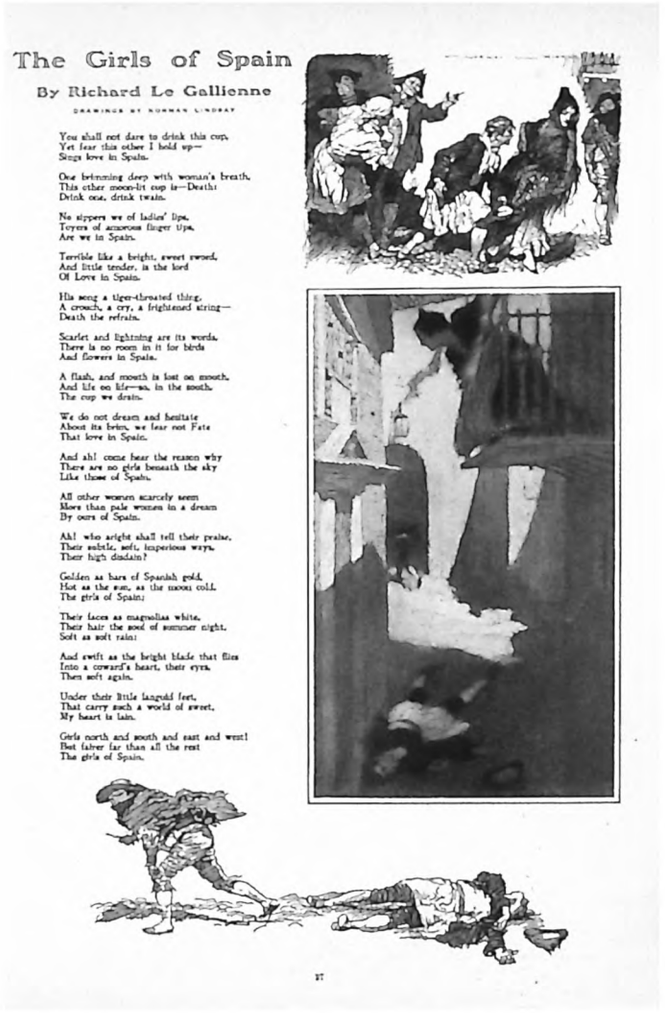
And Poll and Bet and Sue will say—
Good-bye, fare-well!
Good-bye, fare-well!
"Here comes Johnny with his twelve months' pay."
Don't ye see, we're homeward bound.

We're homeward bound, you've heard us say—
Good-bye, fare-ye-well!
Good-bye, fare-ye-well!
Hook on the cat-fall and run her away—
Hurrah! me lads, we're homeward bound.

"Here comes Johnny with his twelve months' pay"

Interior Illustrations for "Homeward Bound," *Harper's*, December 10, 1910

c4 Illustration



Interior Illustrations for "The Girls of Spain," *Harper's*, December 1911

The Bulletin, March 22, 1917

evident in these two humble journalistic commissions, but very original as well. Although one can see the influence of his acknowledged early inspirations, being Dore, Sandys, Abbey, Vierge, and others, (and later on Heinrich Kley), these illustrations for *Harper's* exhibit the same fine line in execution and vitality in spirit that is all his own as his artwork in his native land in *The Lone Hand*, *Satyrs and Sunlight* (1909), and in his magnum opus of pen and ink *The Satyricon* (1910). It was during this period of time, 1907–1910, that Lindsay was first emerging as one of the great black and white artists of all time. Blamire Young, fellow Australian and the fine watercolor and poster artist that Lindsay later credited for introducing him to the proper handling of the watercolor medium, stated in 1907 that "Norman Lindsay's position in Australian art is a triumph of his own personality...he is the foremost black and white man in Australia...His pen-work is astonishing in its vigour, its power and its resource." In addition to this recognition by his peers (Julian Ashton, Sydney Ure Smith too, for example), he was already establishing a place for himself in history producing the first artistic lithograph (meaning limited edition) in Australia in 1909. *Bacchanal*, produced in an edition of fifty copies, featured a procession of nude and semi-nude figures including a centaur and a leopard with a cherub on its back reminiscent of the great German symbolist Franz Von Stuck.

American aficionados of pen and ink will notice the similarity in technique to the tightness and polish of J.R. Flanagan's (who idolized Lindsay) illustrations in *Collier's* and *Bluebook*, and Australians might recall the (non-poster) work of Walter Jardine. Further comparisons can be made, for example, to the lyrically flowing strokes of a Joseph Clement Coll, Flanagan's predecessor in *Collier's*. Possessing a hand "as flexible as a great pianist, as strong as a swordsman's, as sure and as dexterous as a Florentine silver-smith's"—again the words of Blamire Young—enabled Lindsay to tackle any subject, no matter how ambitious, he chose. Take for example his pen drawing, *The Embarkation*, that was seen at the time in the Straus edition of the *Petronius Satyricon*, then in *Pen Drawings* (1918), and many other places since. Lindsay's technique is employed like a Renaissance painter, but instead of utilizing a paint brush, a pen. With infinite care and conviction he portrays the hulls and rigging of ancient boats, the swirling water between them as they are docked, the play of muscles as sailors of different races offload cargo, and the waterfront street stretching back into the distance nestled between the hills of Rome, spotted with classical architecture.

From 1910-1917, *Cartoons Magazine*, published out of Chicago, Illinois, featured his political cartoons on a regular basis, reprinted from the *Sydney Bulletin*. These cartoons are well

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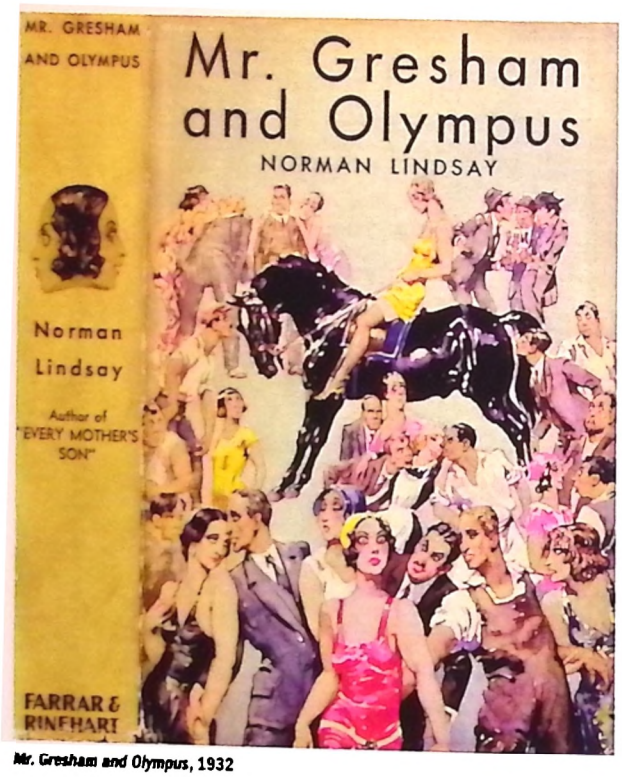
SATAN: "THE TIME HAS COME, I THINK!"
AFTER NORMAN LINDSAY IN THE SYDNEY BULLETIN

Cartoons Magazine, November 1917 (originally reproduced in *The Bulletin*, April 12, 1917)

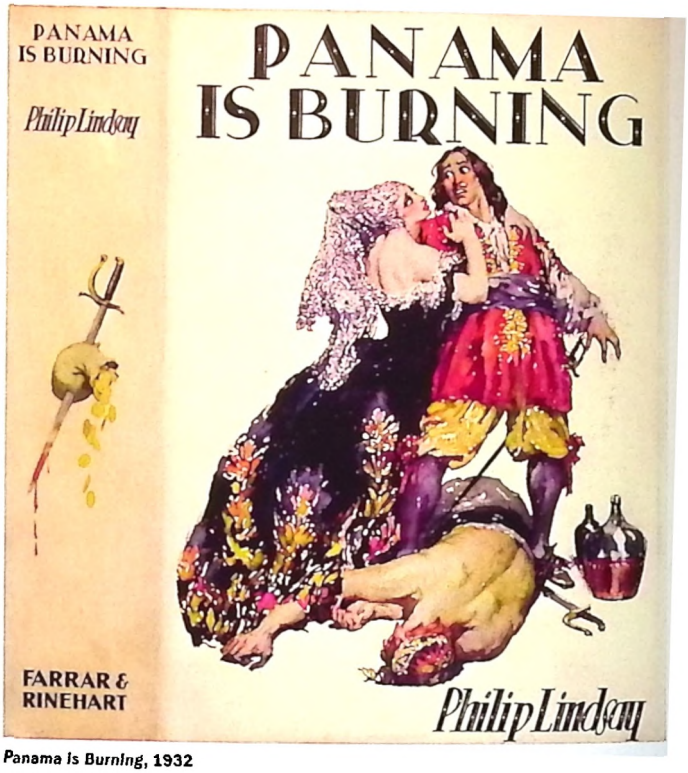
Recruiting poster

worth close scrutiny as they successfully shout out their message, the war cartoons usually portraying the Germans and Japanese as either monsters or buffoons, and yet manage to be immensely satisfying aesthetically as well. The Lindsay piece utilized for the front color cover to the November 1917 issue illustrates this aspect of his *Bulletin* cartoons perfectly. It depicts a towering, red, cloven hoofed devil holding the German Kaiser in his left hand and an I.O.U. for his soul in his right. In *The Journalistic Javelin, An Illustrated History of the Bulletin*, the author Patricia Rolfe, although lauding NL's sense of humor, states that he was not a good political cartoonist because "his attitudes were large and general rather than coming down to the small and sharp point of view which makes the cartoonist." One would have to agree with the basis of that statement and yet still might feel that, at least today, unless you are a history buff familiar with the minutiae of Australian political events at that time, it is the broader, good versus evil nature of his anti-German imperialism cartoons, for example, that makes Lindsay's work accessible, even timeless. Also, the readers of this magazine would be looking at his political cartoons with a critical eye primarily towards their artistic merits, not their content. Lindsay himself mentions this in a letter to Keith Wingrove, that "No better exercise exists for artists than the cartoon for transforming ideas into images and practicing composition."

Recruiting poster



Mr. Gresham and Olympus, 1932



Panama Is Burning, 1932

Another reference to Chicago appears in a letter to Leslie Meller, in which Lindsay mentions that fellow Australian novelist and journalist Vivian Crockett, author of *Messalina*, asked for Lindsay's comments on his current work in progress which Norman gave over lunch. Crockett, bristling at Lindsay's constructive criticism, wrote Norman a few days later, recommending Chicago to Lindsay as the Chicago gangsters being a likely market for Lindsay's work. Lindsay's wry comment to Meller, reflecting upon Crockett's intended insult, was "A pleasing estimation of my work."

During the 1920s the art world witnessed the further development of Lindsay's etchings, 45 of which were beautifully displayed in *The Etchings of Norman Lindsay* published by Constable in London in 1927. This deluxe folio size volume sold out immediately upon publication, faring much better than an exhibition of 14 etchings (and three watercolors) in 1926 at Anderson Galleries in New York. This same period of time saw the blossoming of his watercolors as he refined his technique, displaying great delicacy which few artists, W. Russell Flint is one other that comes to mind, ever achieved. His book illustrations found a home, among other places, in the publications of the Fanfrolico Press, founded in Australia by his son Jack Lindsay and John Kirtley in 1925, but which was shortly thereafter transplanted to England when Jack moved there. They were splendid fine press productions that included *Lysistrata, Satyrs and Sunlight* (an edition combining the earlier editions *Idyllia*, and *Columbine*, with collotypes replacing the original etchings and lithographs of the earlier editions), *Homage to Sappho, Propertius in Love, The Antichrist of Nietzsche, Women in Parliament*, and the *Satyricon* (not just a reprint of the earlier 1910 Straus edition but a redesign with Petronius' poems added) just to name the major titles. American customers ordering these titles from London often saw their purchases seized by the US Post Office.

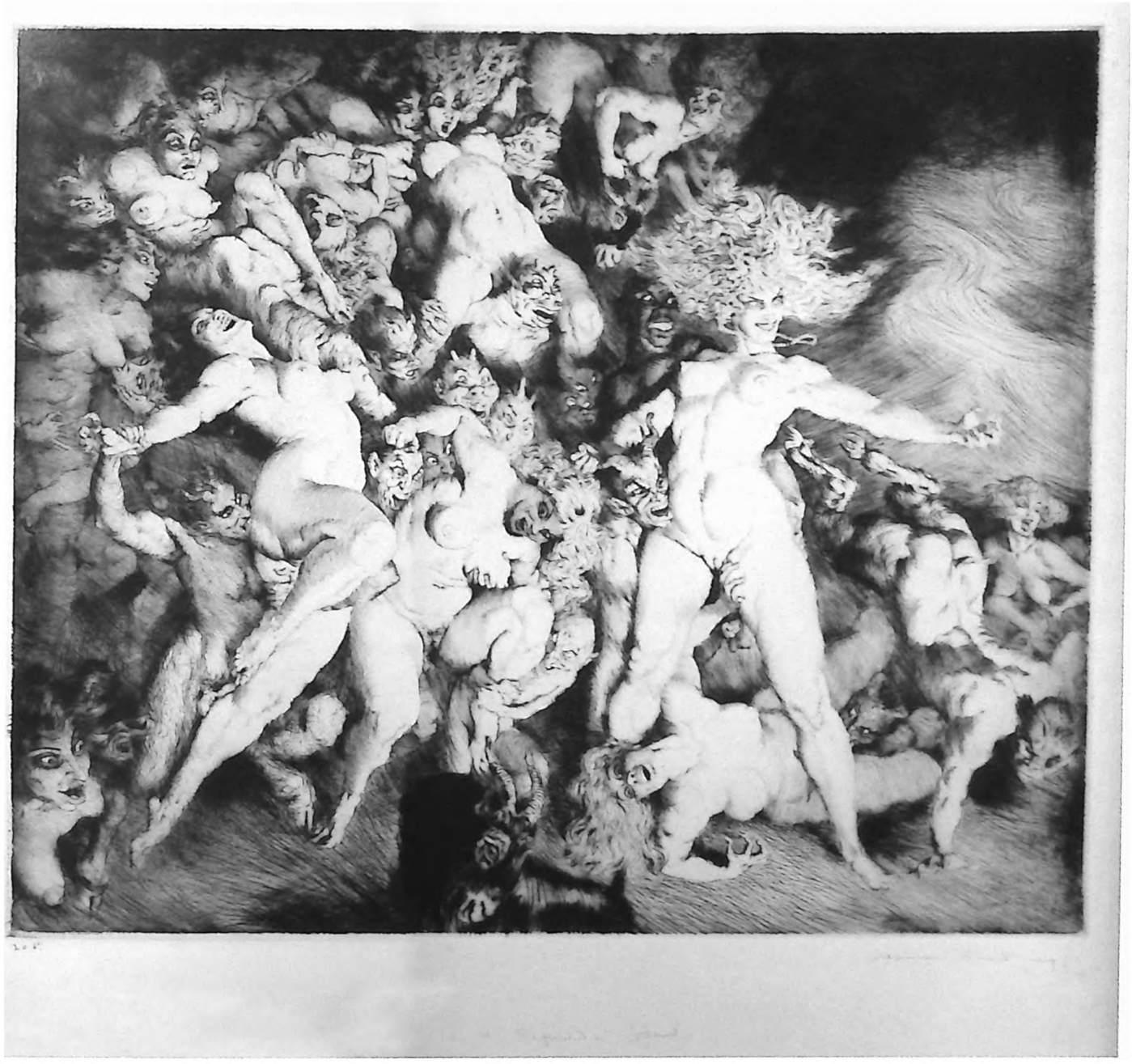
Lindsay felt more appreciated here, however, not as an artist but as a novelist. He commented upon this, as reported in the *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), April 23, 1932, p.3, stating "Americans are in advance of Australians in their appreciation of writing." *Every Mothers Son* (1930, originally titled *Redheap* and banned in Australia), *The Cautious Amorist* (1932), and *Mr. Gresham and Olympus* (1932, the latter published in London as *Miracles by Arrangement*) sporting a beautiful watercolor by Lindsay on the dustwrapper, and then *Pan in the Parlour* (1932) were all published here in quick succession. Another great watercolor graced the dust jacket on his son Philip's novel, *Panama is Burning* (1932). All of these published appearances arranged by his new American friend, the "particularly handsome,"—according to Rose—Stanley Rinehart of Farrar and Rinehart. It was as an illustrator though that Norman found the rate of payment here in America thrilling, declaring that "there was no problem about making a living," referring to Saul Flaum and Ray Long, editors at *Cosmopolitan*, paying him the equivalent of £300 for the two illustrations he did for "Senõr Shark" by Wallace Smith in the December 1931 issue. The title illustration is a splash (two page) wash drawing, and is a very dramatic underwater scene that shows Gaspard, one of the story's main characters, threatened by sharks. As in *Harper's*, Norman was once again keeping good company with the major American illustrators of the day: Flagg, Groesbeck, and others, including, interestingly, Jose Segrelles, the Spanish fantasist who also visited New York. More than just having their work appear together, Lindsay and Flagg met and got along well enough for Lindsay to sit to have the famous American artist paint his portrait.

Interior story illustration for "Señor Shark," *Cosmpolitan*, December 1931. Watercolor, 33" x 29". Photo courtesy of Zaddick Logenback and Illustration House, NY

***Enter the Magicians*, 1927. Etching**

Another notable American that Norman greatly admired but did not get to meet was H.L. Mencken. Mencken had been the coeditor of the *Smart Set*, but it was his *The American Mercury* (1924-1933) which was loved by Norman for its attacks on pedagogy, Prohibition, and Puritanism—the last something he could certainly relate to. The admiration was mutual, with Mencken in a letter to a friend dated August 30, 1944, referring to Norman Lindsay as "a remarkable man, with two remarkable sons."

As a life long lover of the theater it isn't surprising that while here Norman and Rose would know the actress Blanche Yurka and would stay at her apartment, among other places (like The Whitby Hotel, 325 West 45 Street), who just a couple of years earlier had been featured, along with her photograph, in *Redbook* (June, 1929), and is well known to film fans as starring in such movies as *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Queen of the Mob*, *Taxi*, and *Cry of the Werewolf*. There is a copy of the Fanfrolico Press (headed by NL's son Jack Lindsay) edition of *Lysistrata* (1926) in a private collection in NYC today with an original pen and ink showing the heroine of the play speaking with a jazz age flapper by Norman and a gift inscription on the front endpaper to Blanche, presumably as a thank you for her hospitality. In any event, NL enjoyed New York City, even writing an article, "I Like New York," which appeared back in Australia (*The Home*, December 1931). In this article, accompanied by the previously mentioned portrait of him by Flagg, Lindsay relates his admiration for the architecture and the skyline of New York City, noting: "The New York skyscrapers are so beautifully proportioned to its mass that they look like graceful towers rising from it, and not isolated detachments from it." Among other observations he goes on to say how, due to "the courtesy I have met with here is so warming I am embar-



***To the Refined In Spirit*, 1926. Etching**

rassed by it," and concluding "Yes, I like New York. And I more than like Americans."

Another 'first', marking the career of Lindsay, this time here in America, took place February 7, 1931, at the Roerich Museum in New York. The event was the First Contemporary All-Australian Art Exhibition sponsored by the International Art Center of the Roerich Museum, which attracted much attention in the media of the day being reviewed in the *New York Times* and *The Art Digest*, among other news journals. The exhibition was comprised of 92 works of art by 68 artists, many of whom were represented by just a single work. Norman was one of just a few represented by two. It was there that the first sale was Norman Lindsay's etching *Enter the Magicians*, the etching that Lindsay considered his very best, which sold for $100 "within two minutes of the opening of the doors." A very brief review, more of a mention really, of this exhibition appeared February 9, 1931 in the *Sydney Morning Herald* ending with the statement, "Only now and then does an Australian artist succeed in nourishing our imagination." It seems more than possible that this may have been referring to Lindsay's two pieces, as opposed to the majority of the pieces representing his peers consisting primarily of landscapes and still lifes.

Interesting for a couple of reasons was Lindsay manifesting himself as a critic while here. He was able to place the same article "Literature in Australia," not his first foray into essay writing, in both the *Saturday Review of Literature* and *Fortune* magazine. In it he discusses at length the importance of art and literature to a country and extols the qualities found in the writings of his fellow Australians, Henry Lawson and Louis Stone, and the poetry of Hugh McRae. *Fortune* magazine also ran a reproduction of NL's watercolor "The Dear Things" with a caption lauding Lindsay as "Australia's provocative genius."

Our Other Faces

A group of pen drawings

by **NORMAN LINDSAY**

THE secret places of the heart form the locale of these drawings which translate into agile line the stifled ardors and arrogances of the timid lover, the day-dreaming and adventurous aspirations of the eternal homebody. Norman Lindsay is an English born Australian in his late fifties, who looks a lot like Carl Sandburg, who has been famous since the nineties, whose work has been collected by the discriminating for the last thirty years but has never yet percolated down to the level of mass popularity. These drawings are part of an extensive collection in the possession of the Argus Bookshop, Chicago.

Interior Illustrations for "Our Other Faces," *Esquire*, August 1936

Despite the recognition he received here by both publishers and literary and artistic circles, in both his letters and in his autobiography *My Mask*, he makes it clear that he was on a mission to find a publisher willing to embark on an ambitious schedule of seeing Australian authors and poets into print (to avoid a 35% duty recently imposed on the import of books), and a publisher to handle a major volume of his pen and inks, and he would leave America if unsuccessful in this effort. One such publisher that he entered into talks with about his pen and inks was Walter Chrysler, an encounter he described in a letter to Brian Penton (one of Jack Lindsay's partners at Fanfrolico Press in London) about January '32: "I have also arranged for the publication of my big pen-and-inks with a deluxe firm, Cheshire House, run by young Walter Chrysler, son of old millionaire Chrysler...But I don't like either his methods of reproduction or his terms, which are to spend all the possible proceeds on the production of the book and leave no profits." If one examines a Chrysler production like his *The Georgics of Virgil*, having been released in New York that very year (1931), making it more than likely that it's a book Chrysler would have handed Lindsay to show off what Cheshire House was doing, it is possible to comment upon both production values and Lindsay's concern over profits. It's designed by Richard Ellie and limited to 1200 numbered copies, tall folio, well printed on quality paper, bound in boards with a leather spine, and illustrated with twenty full page engravings from the first folio edition. It is not unlike a Fanfrolico production and Lindsay's concern over his work being poorly presented seems unfounded. However, Cheshire House was short lived with only a couple of major titles to its credit, so apparently Norman's worry over an inadequate profit margin was justified. So, that was just one of the disappointments that led to his conclusion that his search to find a major American publishing firm willing to commit to publishing Lindsay's volume of pen and inks, and equally important to him the work of his fellow Australian writers and poets, to be a futile one.

Having failed to realize his main objectives here in the U.S., Lindsay traveled on to England in January 1932. By March he despaired of finding a publisher there too, partly due to a tariff problem, plus he hated the climate, so he booked passage on the Mongolia and returned home to Australia. His solution to the challenge of seeing worthy Australian prose and poetry into print was to establish the Endeavour Press that, although it only survived about two and a half years, successfully published about twenty titles.

Lindsay's work surfaces again here in *Esquire*, The Magazine for Men, in the August 1936 issue. Under the title that Norman himself suggested (in a letter to Ben Abramson dated December 23, 1931), "Our Other Faces," five beautiful pen and inks from the collection of The Argus Bookshop are presented on a single full page. These were first commissioned by Abramson when Lindsay was in New York in 1931. They are almost the polar opposite of the work of the other featured artist in this issue, Ivan Albright, where we

Seeking originals of the illustrations by **HUGH RANKIN** pictured in this ad, for purpose of reproducing them in a special edition of the fairy tale, *Arabelle and Wiggelleywumps*, appearing in various issues of *Hollands* magazine during 1920, written by Anna Forbes Liddell. Desire excellent scans or jpg images, willing to consider purchase of originals.

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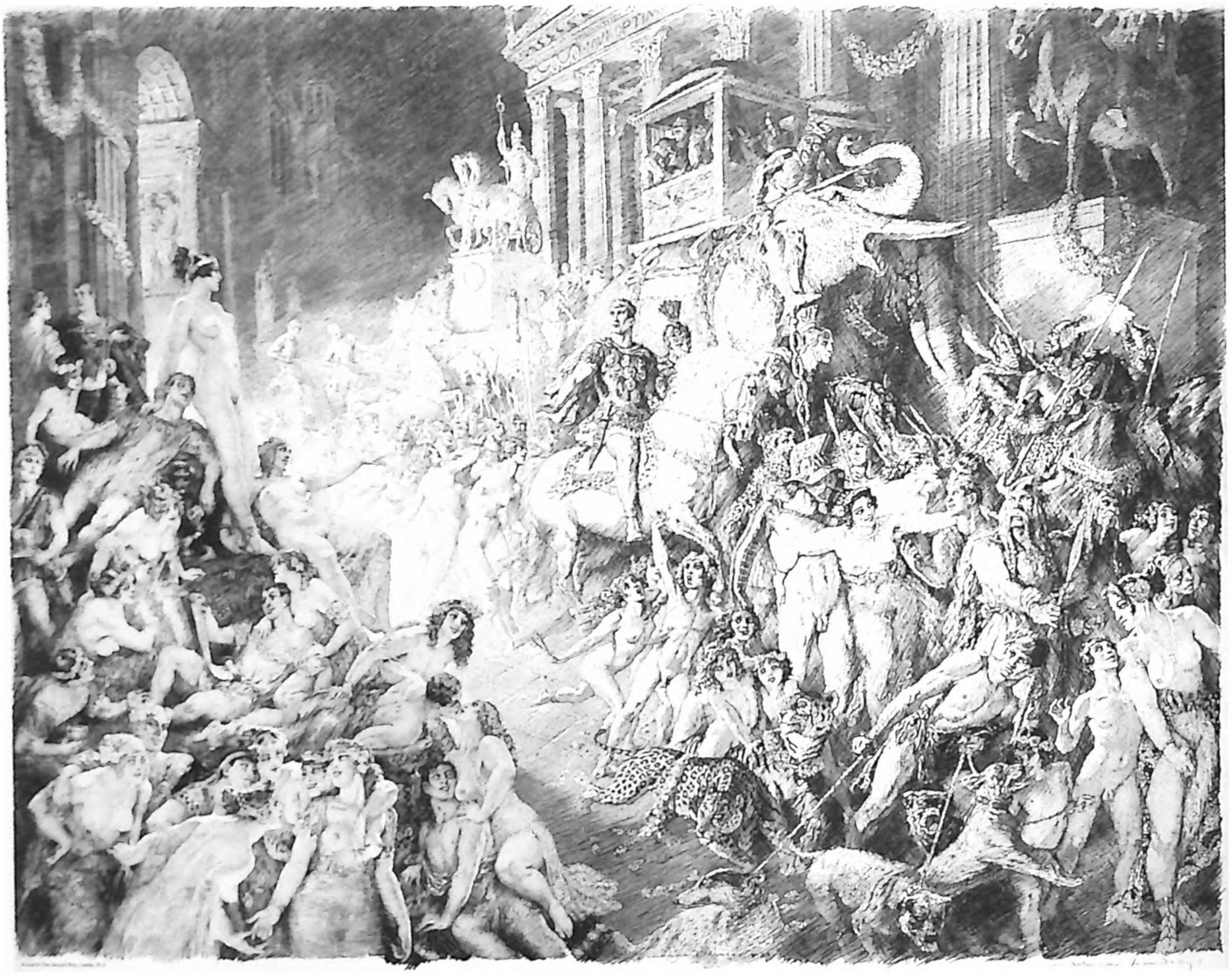


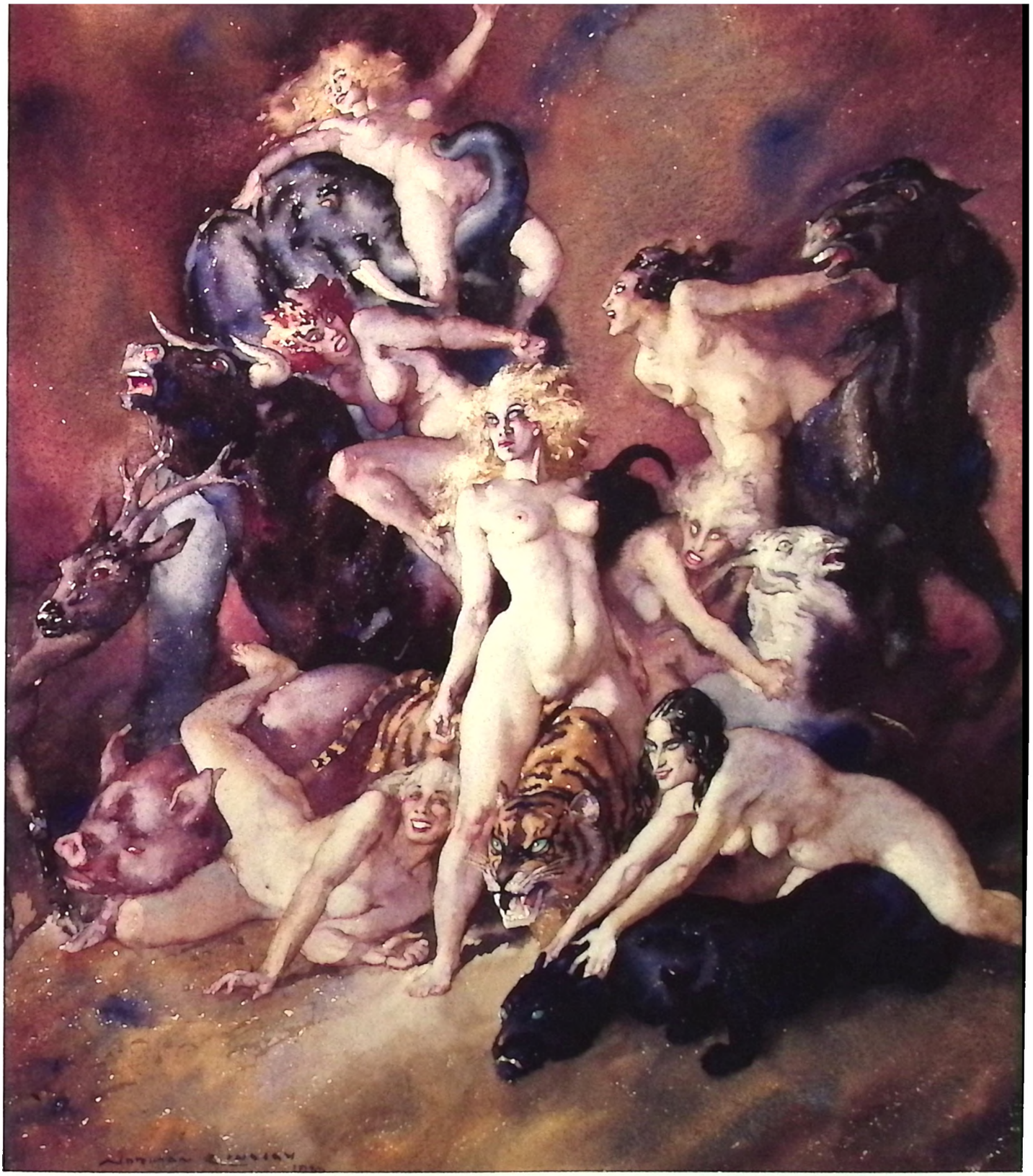
"IN VAIN THE CHRISTIAN"

***In Vain the Christian*, 1928**

are given four examples of his portraits, with their grossly colored and textured skin. Lindsay's drawings depict scenes such as a seated frustrated looking man fantasizing about a buccaneer's life, in another a late middle-aged man stands before his wife reading a book that conjures up a fantastic scene of beautiful mermaids and harpies flinging themselves towards the stern of a galleon.

Perhaps the most important news magazine in America from it's inception until now, *Time*, The Weekly Newsmagazine, in the July 11, 1938 issue, there appeared a review of Norman's book *Age of Consent*. The unknown reviewer, after a brief plot summary of this novel whose central character Mudgett is an artist much like Lindsay himself, concludes that, "By the time his emotions are most involved he is painting like a genius, thus demonstrating Author Lindsay's sly thesis that artists' search for solitude is futile, that they create best, not when they have things their own way, but when the world is too much for them." The truly flattering thing about the review is that Lindsay, unlike the other seven writers under review, is featured in a photo (credited to Wide World) showing him painting a watercolour of his wife Rose standing in a full-length dress.

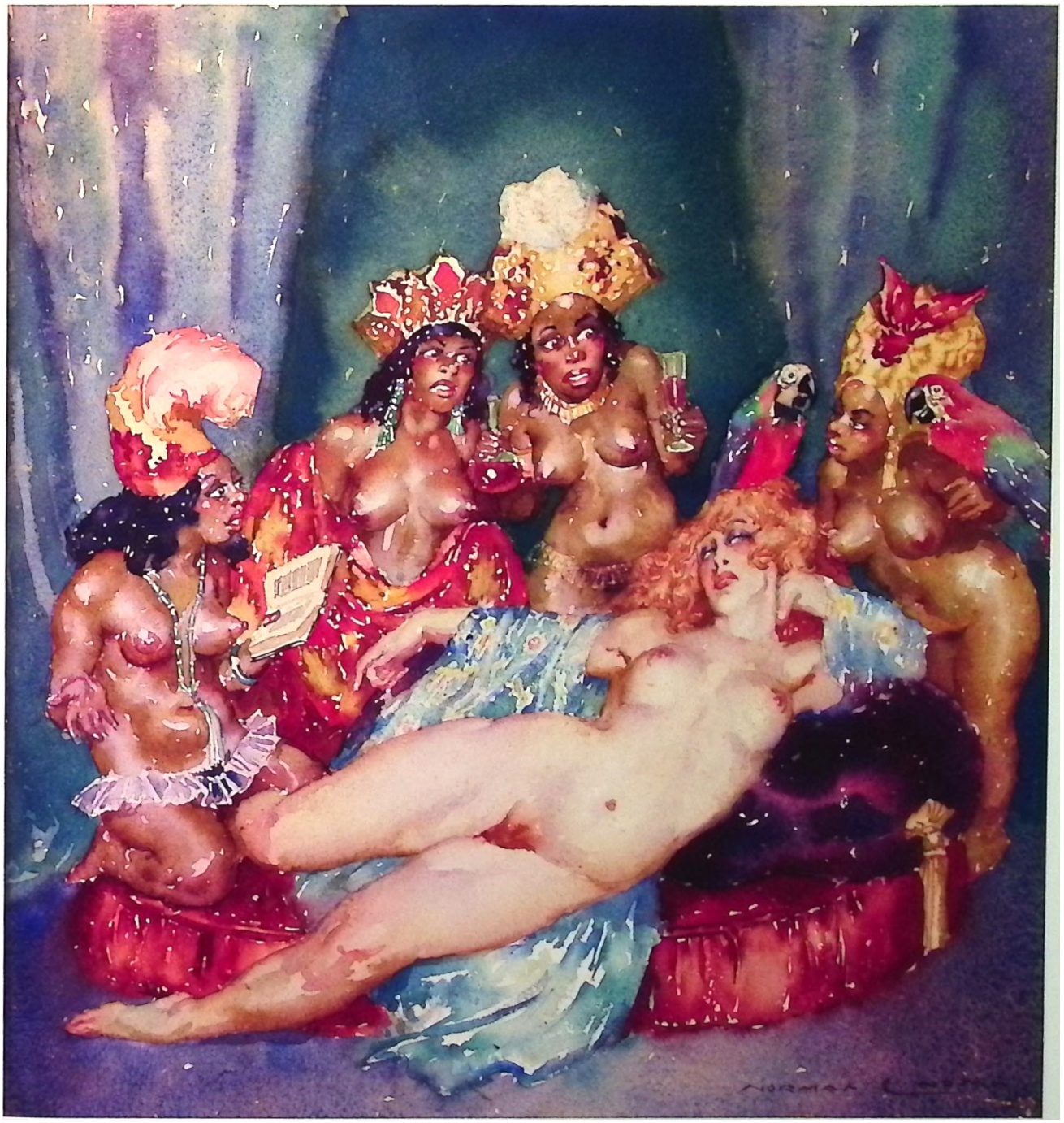
Although Norman was never to return to our shores again, his wife Rose did. It occurred in June of 1941 that Rose decided to come here "probably due to war nerves" she admits in *Model Wife*, accompanied by her son-in-law Bruce Glad, who was married at the time to Honey, one of Rose's and Norman's two daughters. Rose brought with her several specially made large crates containing choice examples of Norman's watercolors, pen drawings, and oils that she felt were representative of his very best work. Apparently, being uninsured, the crates were not taken too seriously, and were carelessly placed immediately behind the engine of the train transporting them, and they caught fire outside of Scranton, PA. Pieces that survived were either samples that Bruce Glad had taken ahead with him to NYC, like the pen and ink *Madame Life's Succession*, the oils in separate steel cylinders, and a very few pen and inks and watercolors, albeit charred around the edges, packed in the center of the crates, for example the pen and ink *In Hommage to the Poetry of Leon Gellert*. An example of the casualties being the finely detailed and dramatic pen and ink, *In Vain the Christian*, one of his pieces inspired by the philosophy of Nietzsche.



***Beauties and Beasts*, 1933. Watercolor on board, 18" x 16"**

Probably the most poignant accounts of this tragedy are Jane Lindsay's "The Gods Smile Less" in *Portrait of Pa*, and "The Fire in America" in *The World of Norman Lindsay*, and her vivid description of three lost watercolors that hung in Springwood which she loved as a child that were of "magnificent big white sea horses riding enormous blue waves with their attendant mermaids" is heart rending, particularly in light of how, "On to the platform were thrown the charred watercolours and pen drawings of nude mermaids and sirens, satyrs, lascivious pirates and bacchanalian goings on. It was too much for decent people to stand. Before corruption could set in, they made a pile of the pathetic survivors and relit the fire."

***The Poet*, 1933. Watercolor on board**



***Reclining Nude with Four Nude Native Coloured Girls*, 1933. Watercolor on board**

There is no known exact record of the lost works, or even just the actual number. Jane Glad refers to hundreds but then later states, "A hundred would be a conservative guess, not counting the many etching prints."(123 etchings according to Lin Bloomfield in *The Complete Etchings of Norman Lindsay*, page 169). Lin Bloomfield, in her Editor's Epilogue in *Model Life* (Odana Editions), mentions "almost a thousand" (perhaps including lithographs, etc?) The 100 estimate appears likely because Rose describes the writer and their close friend Noel Langley spending a morning going through all of the crates and pictures when she visited his home in California before they were shipped, something you couldn't realistically do with much more than a 100 originals. It would also coincide with the number taken by Rose (and Norman) on their previous trip to the U.S. comprised of about "60 pen and inks, 40 watercolors..." as reported in the *Daily Telegraph* (July 24, 1931, p.7). In a letter to his son Philip at that time, Norman estimated the worth of the lost works to be 17,000 Australian pounds, about $560,000 in today's money! That figure reflects the change in currency without updating the values!

March of the Scallywags, 1947. Watercolor on board

Norman took the loss in stride, even going back to his preliminary pencil sketches and repainting some of the watercolors (two examples can be found in the Odana Watercolour book, *Merchandise and Bacchanal.*) Rose did not. It haunted her the rest of her life. She considered it "the major tragedy of my life."

Being an extremely prolific artist, Norman never ran out of art for Rose to sell. One of the major outlets of his work here was Ben Abramson's Argus Bookshop in Chicago, Illinois. In *The Argus Book Shop: A Memoir* by his daughter Deborah Covington, she relates how "one of the most exciting events at the Argus" was an exhibition of Lindsay's works. She mentions how Ben admired Norman's work and sold a great deal of it. She also supplies us with a wonderful childhood anecdote of how when she had been home sick for a week her mother invited her class to visit her. During their visit the kids swarmed into her family's living room and consumed hot chocolate and cookies. When she had recuperated and returned to school one of the boys refused to play with her saying his mom had forbidden it because the Abramson house had "naked women in it." Ben led his distressed daughter into the family living room and figured out that the boy was referring to a small painting by Lindsay of a female nude hanging on the wall.

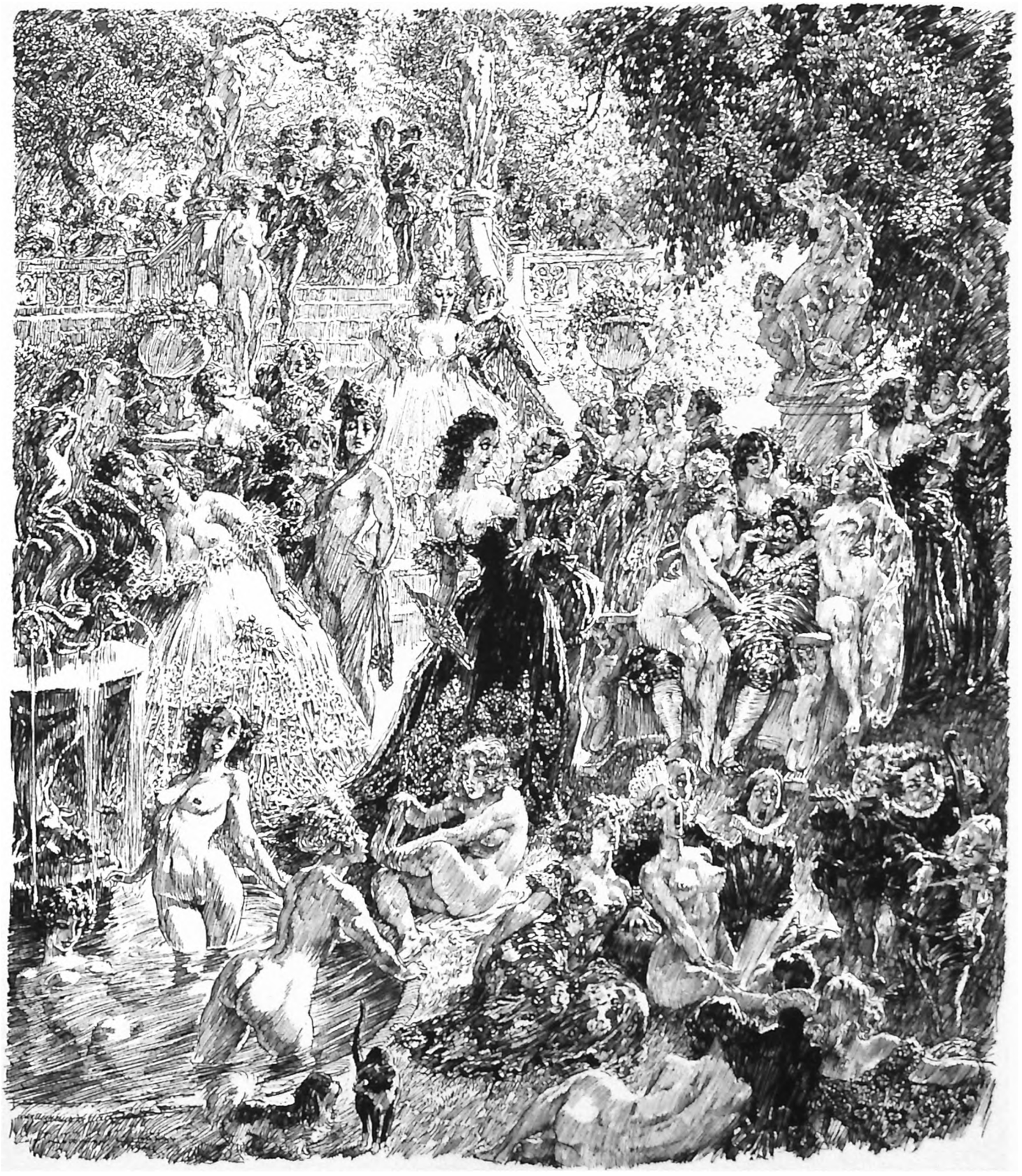
It was during the 1940s that a remarkable collection of art was being put together by the Boston attorney John Merriam, and the Argus Book Shop plays a prominent role. John Merriam, in his personal notebook dated August 11, 1982, cites in reference to his acquisition of eight John Austen originals: "I acquired all of these from the Argus Book Shop, Ben Abramson proprietor, during the early 1940s when passing through Chicago on military duty." It is from this source, and various others such as Fabes, and Ray Lewis, that John Merriam

Urs Graf In Heaven. **Watercolor on board, 20.5" x 30.5"**

put together a significant collection of art including the originals by Lindsay, and many originals by Flint, Bayros, Kley, and others. The writer of this article was fortunate in viewing this collection more than once, and of the twelve originals by Lindsay that held me spellbound in the John Merriam three-story brownstone at 20 Embankment Road, six illustrate this article. Of the six, certainly two gems that stand out are the watercolor *Beauties and the Beasts*, dated 1933 and measuring 18.5 by 16 inches, and the wash drawing *Urs Graf in Heaven*, signed and titled, measuring 20.5 by 30.5 inches. Another noteworthy watercolor from the Merriam collection is *March of the Scalliwags*, dated 1947, which begs comparison to the oil painting entitled *March of the Scalliwags* which can be found in *Norman Lindsay Oil Paintings*, pp. 238-239. The watercolor is closer to the oil in the photograph of the artist seated in front of the painting than the full-page painting opposite it. It differs in a few important respects, with the trumpet playing dwarf on the right side replaced by a goat with two children behind it, with a flute playing Norman self-caricature standing behind them, and the additional girl front left, next to Miss Buttocks in lieu of the wine jug. Most artists use a favorite composition more than once—to cite just one major example, Arnold Bocklin painting his influential *Isle of the Dead* at least four times. Lindsay was no exception, producing for example both etching and watercolor treatments of *Unknown Seas*, and identical watercolor and oil versions of *Captured*. But, with *March of the Scallywags* were two different oils executed, or did Lindsay paint over one? (Also not unheard of with oil painters.)

In Hommage to the Poetry of Leon Gellert, **1920s. Scorched by fire**

Old Paris. 1934. Pen and ink. 15" x 10"



The Duke Gives a Party, 1941. Pen and Ink, 17" x 14"

Lindsay's wonderful sense of humor was not only evident in the previously discussed cartoons he did for journals like the *Sydney Bulletin*, but it was also a major reason for the success of his novels. When *The Cousin from Fiji* appeared here, published by Random House in 1945, it was reviewed by the critic Bennett Cerf, known to many Americans as a TV personality on such shows as *What's My Line?*, who wrote "How accurate a picture this is of high life in Australia I am not prepared to state. I only know that I laughed myself sick over it."

In the early 1950s another American, on a far more limited budget, was attempting to collect Lindsay material. Roy Krenkel, a rising star in the field of comics and paperback covers at the time, became enamored with Norman's art. Krenkel made contact with Lindsay's agent at the time, Sedon-Thompson, and engaged in a spirited exchange of letters, not just going over the details of purchasing more than a few etchings, and begging and pleading for snapshots of watercolors, but also sharing opinions and even comparing interpretations of the symbolism of various works. In fact Krenkel refers to their epistolary exchanges as an indulgence "in this sport of symbolic detective work. We have not seen any record of what Lindsay may have had to say about the "message" of *To The Refined in Spirit* , but Roy Krenkel took a stab at it reflecting in a letter to Sedon Thompson dated September 23, 1952, "I associate goats with fertility and with rites of black magic—but as a clue it isn't enough. The only 'focal' figure in the whole thing—the only one whose attitude or action seems to dominate is, of course, the magnificent touseled amazon with the fierce eyes and clenched hand." Lindsay did in fact explain some works, for example, in letters to the owners of the watercolors *Unknown Seas* and *Out of the Dawn*, more often than not, drawing from "Greek conception(s)." *Enter the Magicians*, a very important etching for several reasons; he considered it technically his finest, again, it was the first artwork sold at the exhibition at the NY Roerich museum, and the Krenkel collection includes it (parties seriously interested in this unique collection should contact the author of this article), Lindsay gave the following explanation of its symbolism: "The Magicians of course, are the artists—the creators, whose function is to create human consciousness by revealing life in all its complexities of human passion to mankind. The figure of Life is still veiled, but the veil is transparent—already art has made its revelation and Life, since Homer made its first analysis, is revealed to us. We know the passions which motivate man, but Life will always be an enigma, and therefore the transparent veil remains. The dignified figure of the Magician represents Creative Art—the malicious small magician represents the destructive element in Art...The whirling image of the five pointed star represents Fire, the dripping figures emerging from below represent Water, the Salamander and the Naiad—the elemental symbols of the creation of biological life. The strong figure clasping the boy and girl represent the bi-sexual constrction of the human entity—half man, half woman...the Bull with the primitive male figure symbolizing the fecundity of life. ...It is against my principle to explain my works. Firstly, the explanation destroys the intellectual exercise of divining the picture's motive, and secondly, it does not matter what intellectual concept the picture arouses as long as it is emotionally and aesthetically responded to."

Sedon-Thompson himself, was quite passionate about Lindsay's art, as reflected in one letter from 1951 describing at some length, among other pieces for sale, the watercolor *Girls and Glory*, from "the jubilant collection of very assorted females" to the "about 200 stars that even seem to twinkle", this, despite the fact that it had already just sold for 300 gns (it changed hands again in 2001 for $30,000AUS at auction.) During this time, Krenkel corresponded under the name of his friend and fellow comic book artist Al Williamson. Apparently Lindsay, having seen some of the artwork of Virgil Finlay, renowned for his illustrations in the pulps, resenting what he felt were some direct "swipes" or "lifting" things like demons from his art, confused Krenkel with Finlay. Consequently, when Krenkel admitted to the use of Williamson's name, Sedon-Thompson broke things off, apologizing to Krenkel but asserting he did not care to risk Norman's and Rose's displeasure. Krenkel did in fact execute a group of drawings in NL's style, but as an admitted homage and not for publication. It is obvious that Krenkel idolized Lindsay's work from statements like the one he made to Sedon-Thompson in a letter postmarked September 16, 1952, "The absolute ease and surety—the terrific vitality of Lindsay's creations never cease to amaze me...There is something about Lindsay's work, at its best that is, that sets it apart and, in my opinion, above *all* other pictorial work. I *think* it is his feeling for great, unifying rhythms—every line, every mass relates *fluidly* to every other."

Drawing by Roy G. Krenkel, inspired by Norman Lindsay

Norman Saunders

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There has been at least one other major collection of Lindsay's art here. At a Sotheby's auction in Sydney Australia on August 27 and 28, 2001, at least a half dozen fine watercolors and one wash drawing were sold. The provenance cited was Yale Bradlyn of Florida who apparently acquired them in the 1950s from Sedon Galleries. Also notable is Managing Director of Sotheby's at the time, Martin Gallon, in his catalogue introduction, refers to the "Norman Lindsays from Florida" as one of the two high spots of the sale, a rare nod of respect given to this out of the mainstream artist. It is also worth noting that one of the watercolors *Girls and Glory* that had been described (as noted above) by Sedon Thompson to Roy Krenkel was one of the lots. *Girls and Glory* was destined to end up in Yankee hands!

Later that decade (the 50s) in Chicago, Illinois, arguably the epicenter of Lindsayana in America, *The American Book Collector* published no less than three articles of great interest to Lindsay collectors. The first was a three-part (monthly) article running from September to November 1956, entitled "Collecting Norman Lindsay" by George Mackaness, wherein he speaks from personal experience, having successfully collected all but a couple of the titles under discussion. The other articles were "The Fanfrolico Press, an appreciation" by Anthony Adams, in the April 1959 issue, and again George Mackaness with "Australian Private Presses" in the February 1960 issue. All of these articles were illustrated with repros of dust jackets or title pages from various Lindsay titles.

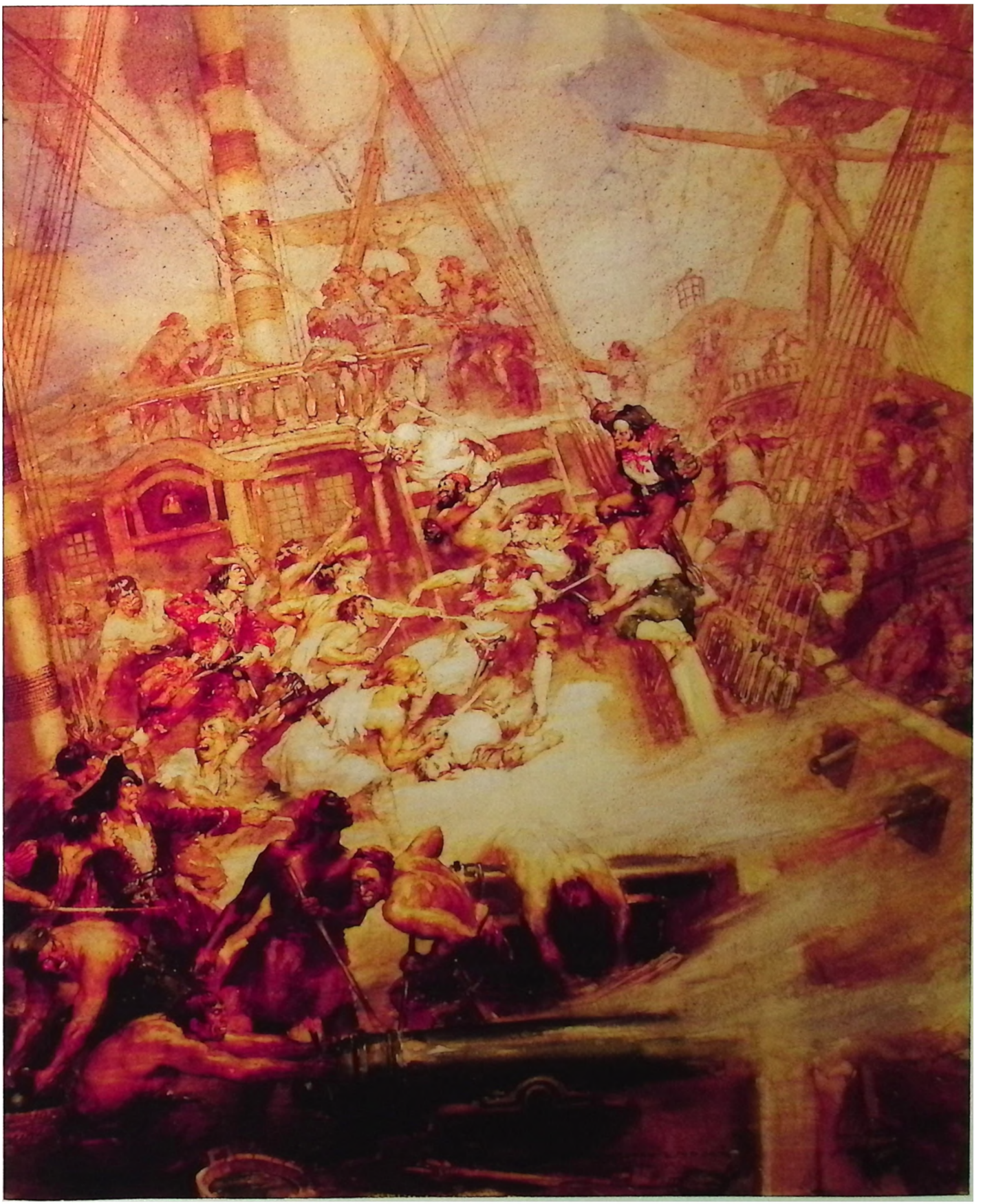
In 1955 Lindsay sold the film rights to *The Cautious Amorist* to fellow writer and family friend Noel Langley, who coproduced it, wrote the screenplay, directed it, and released it here in America as *Adventures of Sadie* starring Joan Collins. Unfortunately, according to Langley in a letter to Lindsay, between movie censors disallowing "charming costumes" and Joan Collin's contract forbidding any nude shots, Langley was hamstringed and ended up with a movie he considered a "Bowdlerised, deodorized version (that) was so clean and tidy that it almost defeated its own purpose." However, Langley claimed that it found a very receptive American audience as a 20th Century Fox second feature playing "to roars of continuous laughter all over the country."

Despite loving pirates as a literary and artistic inspiration, Lindsay was quite agitated by the reality of his work being pirated here (used without his permission with no royalties going to him.) He complained bitterly over publications such as the Three Sirens Press edition of *Lysistrata* (NY, 1932) and *Inns of Greece and Rome* (Covici, 1928), not only for "ignoring the copyright conventions of other nations" but for the horrible reproduction quality. This also occurred in magazines like *Adam* and *Eros* and notably in *Playboy* (published in Chicago, IL), in an articled titled "Art Nouveau Erotica" in the December 1967 issue, where six of Lindsay's works appear along with artists such as von Bayros. Two observations can be made regarding the piracy of his work, not to condone it, but to put it in perspective. The piracy here in the U.S. certainly served to spread his fame a little farther and wider, and U.S. publishers were not the only guilty parties, his work was pirated back in Australia as well.

It is in this same context, that of spreading his fame, that although technically outside the scope of this article, mention should be made of Michael Powell's cinematic treatment of Norman's novel, preserving the title *Age of Consent*, and little else, starring James Mason and Helen Mirren, in 1968; and in 1994 John Duigan directed *Sirens*, starring Sam Neill as Norman Lindsay, a flawed film but yet of some interest. Finally, a film that has not really been distributed here in America, the animation film very loosely based on Lindsay's Australian children's classic, *The Magic Pudding*, starring the voices of Sam Neill, John Cleese, and Geoffrey Rush. The DVD is notable for the added bonus "Making Of" segment, during which we get to see Lindsay himself, for just a precious moment, being interviewed on Australian television, commenting on why he wrote *The Magic Pudding*. This is the book that has earned Lindsay praise in children's book circles around the world, about which Robert Holden, a renowned authority on book illustrators and children's books as well as a novelist, in his *A Golden Age, Visions of Fantasy, Australia's Fantasy Illustrators* (Angus and Robertson, 1992), states, "In its own day it was virtually without parallel, today its appeal seems timeless and its classic status unchallenged."

Recognition for Lindsay's work here in America has begun to surface with increasing frequency over the last couple of decades. In 1993 SooLoo Press, feeling that the American Lindsay fan had been underserved, published a boxed collection of 30 previously unpublished watercolors entitled *Mermaids and Moonlight*. The same year, Leslie Cabarga, in his *Dynamic Black and White Illustration, One Hundred Years of Line Art, 1900-2000*, featured two decorations and two full-page pen and inks from Lindsay's *Lysistrata*. To coincide with Lin Bloomfield's release of the definitive volume on Lindsay's etchings, *Norman Lindsay Etchings, Catalogue Raisonné*, The Old Print Shop in New York City held an exhibition and sale of 40 original etchings that ran from November 2 until Christmas 1999. To add an additional enticement, there was a free lecture by an Australian expert on both etchings and Lindsay's work in this medium, Josef Lebovic (himself the owner of a fine gallery.)

Perhaps it is not too much of a stretch to assert that Norman Lindsay has had more of an effect on American artists than those back in Australia, or any other country. More recently than the aforementioned Flanagan, Finlay, and Roy Krenkel (and others of their generations), his influence seems to be gaining strength here over the years. For example, Roy Krenkel's friend and fellow artist Al Williamson reminisced in *Hidden Lands* (Dark Horse Books, by Yeates, Schultz, Ringgenberg, October 2004), "Roy (Krenkel) was the guy who turned me on to all the great artists, like Norman Lindsay." In *Bettie Page Rules* (Dark Horse, September 2007), we find artist Jim Silke depicting Lindsay's Lysistrata, the illustration where she is standing in front of the male citizens, with Lysistrata sporting Bettie's face. Other American artists too numerous to name, from William Stout to Gary Gianni, cite Lindsay as, if not a stylistic influence, a major inspiration.



Pirates, 1925. Watercolor on board

Laughter, March 1942. Etching

Norman himself would frown down from Olympus if this article failed to acknowledge the two foremost champions of his work over the last 30 years, appropriately enough, both women. First, Helen Glad, his granddaughter, who has been involved in virtually every aspect of promoting his work from acting on the board at the Norman Lindsay Springwood Museum and National Trust to writing catalog entries (who could possibly write more authoritatively or insightfully?) for major auction houses, and everything in between. Then there is Lin Bloomfield, starting with editing the splendid volume *The World of Norman Lindsay* (1979), and over the last ten years establishing Odana Editions, being ably assisted by both Jane

and Becky Bloomfield. Their wonderful books have now covered almost every aspect of Lindsay's output and are distributed here in the U.S. by Bud Plant. Future titles, and further affordable facsimile etchings, are eagerly anticipated!

In his serious, and what he considered to be his most important work, Norman Lindsay consistently expressed his innermost convictions, adhering to the belief that the most crucial thing in the world was Creative Effort, and that its eternal principle of life, life being the prime enigma of the universe, and it's image, being the symbol of beauty, is the feminine dominant. Or, as he wrote quite succinctly in his book *Scribblings of an Idle Mind*, " ...the function of the Nude in Art... (is) of the first importance...Its symbol remains to us as a freed mind in a freed body," and "The naked human body is life's supreme symbol." It is his faithfulness to this philosophy, and his intimate sharing of his emotions springing from it, as expressed in the compositions that sprung from his imagination inspired by it, that recall the words of H. DeVere Stacpoole, author of *The Blue Lagoon*, in his introduction to *The Poems of Francois Villon* (NY, John Lane, 1914), one of Norman's very favorite poets, that could be applied to Lindsay with equal validity, "in any civilization to follow ours he will hold the same high place; for it is his essential that the forms of his genius are the concretions of eternal principles, not the flowery expansions of ephemeral moods."

—© *Louis Irmo, 2009*

This article is dedicated to Ian Kelf, great guy, the ultimate Lindsay collector, and wonderful friend.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Helen Glad and the Lindsay Estate. Photographs (Merriam Collection) courtesy of the Print Department of the Boston Public Library. Robert Holden, and his invaluable research. Wm. Hallam Webber for his generous sharing and assistance. Finally, I must thank Karen Shafts, Jane Bloomfield, Tom Mathieson, Barry Klugerman, Randy Broecker, John Dowling, and my wife Susan, my muse and collaborator.

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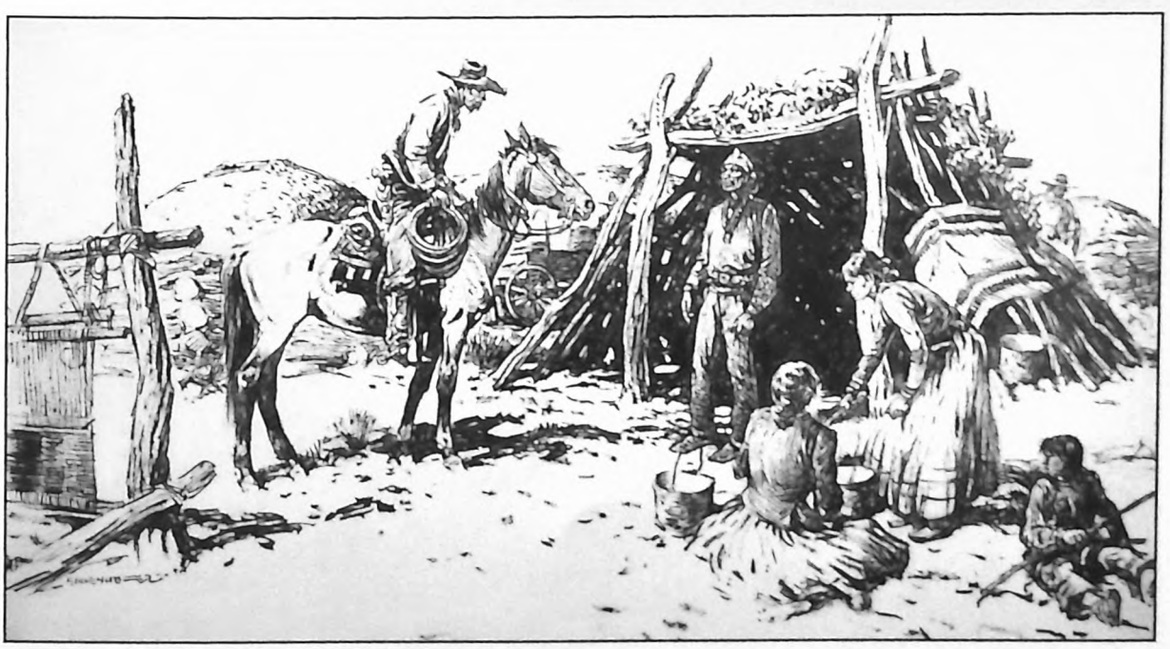
The letters of Roy Krenkel–Sedon Thompson (Wm. Hallam Webber collection)



Navajo Summer Hogan
Dry Brush and Gouache; 12" x 21"

Nick Eggenhofer
Circa 1930

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American Academy of Art

Student logo design, 1960s

The American Academy of Art

Part Two *by* Aron Gagliardo

The American Academy of Art had survived the desperate Depression years and the severely diminished enrollment during World War II to come forth as a national and internationally known school of the upmost quality and instruction. Coupled with this was Chicago's prominence as a world advertising capital with dozens of top illustrators and studios. One only needs to look at the names of those that passed through the halls of the school, a list that reads like a who's-who of masters of the craft: Haddon Sundblom, Gil Elvgren, Charles Showalter, Thornton Utz, Lynn Buckham, Joyce Ballantyne, K.O. Munson, Douglass Crockwell, Tom Ryan, Eddie Augustiny, Ben Stahl, Jack Wittrup, Glen Grohe, Tran Mawicke, Ed Vebell, Coby Whitmore, Arthur Frahm, Harry Ekman, Arnold Kohn, Vaughan Bass, Jerome Biederman, Lloyd Rognan, Thomas Blackshear, Alex Ross and many more. And these are only the illustrators.

An Instructor in the painting studio, circa 1950s

THE INSTRUCTORS

"I consistently recommend the American Academy of Art on account of the complete background of practical training the school offers. The success of your students is your best endorsement."

—Andrew Loomis

From his years in commercial art, Frank Young Sr. had the pleasure of knowing dozens of the most talented illustrators working in the field. Once the Academy was open he would use his artist friends to the school's, as well as the students', advantage by filling the classrooms with some of the most talented working artists of the time. Some of these instructors can be identified by last name alone: Loomis, St. John, Elvgren—others, while not as well known, would have a life-long influence on their students. Instructors like William Mosby, Vern Stake, William Zimmerman, Antonin Sterba, Irving Shapiro, Bill L. Parks, Ted Smuskiewicz, Lou Ann Burkhardt and Rich Kryczka, to mention just a few. Students had the advantage of requesting to study with a specific instructor they admired. Illustrator Jack Wittrup was so eager to study with Loomis he is mentioned no fewer than four times on his student record. In the words of Howard Terpning, "A school is only as good as its instructors."

Now lets take a look at a few of the students who made a name for themselves after attending the Academy and how each career grew and changed along the way.

◄ Nude study by William Mosby, 1963

Life drawing by Gillette Elvgren, circa 1930s

Life drawing by Gillette Elvgren, circa 1930s

GILETTE ELVGREN

What more can be said about the great Gil Elvgren? His popularity only seems to grow each year, eclipsing former kings of cheesecake Alberto Vargas and George Petty. The gorgeous pin-up paintings he created appear—legally or illegally—on almost every product imaginable. His dedication at the Academy should come as no surprise. Such was his skill that he was asked to teach a few years after completing his studies. It's also well known that Elvgren took classes virtually around the clock. Beginning in early 1934 he could be found studying at the Academy day and night.

His studies began with methods, also known as fundamentals, and then he moved on to study with Antonin Sterba for life drawing and William Mosby for illustration. Plenty of illustration, up until his last night class in May of 1936. Elvgren moved back to Minnesota after completing his studies and then returned to Chicago in 1940 to work with Sundblom's studio and teach night classes at the Academy. What survives of Elvgren's work from this period gives us a never-before-seen look at some of his early life drawings, his natural talent, and his rapid growth into a fully formed master.

Life drawing by Gillette Elvgren, circa 1930s

Figure Study by Joyce Ballantine, circa 1940s

Joyce Ballantine, 1940s

JOYCE BALLANTYNE

One can't mention Elvgren's time at the Academy without mentioning Joyce Ballantyne. The two met when Ballantyne was a student of Elvgren's. Ballantyne recalled to me in a phone conversation several years ago that "Gil was a wonderful friend, we would help each other out and finish paintings for each other when deadlines were tight. Or we would pose for one another. Once, Gil had me posed as on a trapeze." It's also Elvgren's influence that got Joyce into painting pin-ups. "I didn't want to do them at first, but Gil told me it was good money so I thought why not? But sometimes I signed them using a different name." In the era when female illustrators could be counted on one hand, Ballantyne was not only one of the best, but she also created a true American icon, the Coppertone girl.

Born in Norfolk, Nebraska, Ballantyne began sketching in grade school. She would finish high school in a brisk 2 ½ years, winning several fashion prize awards along the way. Then she entered the University of Nebraska and took all the art courses permitted. During her stint at the University a department store executive known only as Mr. Wilson—for whose children's department she had done some murals—became interested in her work and persuaded her Father to send her to the Academy. She entered the Academy in 1937 and finished up in Gil Elvgren's night class during March of 1940. While still a student she joined Kling Studios, illustrating maps for Rand McNally while also clerking at Field's and working in a cafeteria to help finance her studies. It was at the Academy that she met her future husband and fellow illustrator, Eddie Augustiny. She then went to work with the famous Stevens-Gross studio where she created the Coppertone Girl in addition to art for dozens of other clients over her long and rewarding career.

Nude in Black Boa by Joyce Ballantine, circa 1950s. Oil on canvas, 30" x 24"

Study for *Sitting Pretty* by Joyce Ballantine, circa 1950s. Oil on board, 19.5" x 13.5"

Illustration by Howard Terpning, 1950

HOWARD TERPNING

Easily one of the most popular and talented western artists of all time, Howard Terpning has created masterful renderings of Plains Indians for decades. A recent New York Times article described him thus: "Howard Terpning just may be the most successful artist you've never heard of." This came after not one but two paintings of his made news around the world after selling for over one million dollars each. Long before this, Terpning worked as a commercial illustrator. During this time he created dozens of movie posters including the classic images for *Gone with the Wind*, *Cleopatra*, *Doctor Zhivago*, *The Sound of Music*, and *Lawrence of Arabia*. He would study at the Academy under William Mosby and Antonin Sterba beginning in May of 1949 until February of 1950.

I recently had the pleasure of corresponding with Mr. Terpning and gained some insight into his time at the Academy, his early work including his many movie poster illustrations, and his current thoughts on the foundation of his long and storied career.

Aron Gagliardo: What are you currently working on?
Howard Terpning: An oil painting entitled *Scout for General Terry's Command*, size 23" x 30".
AG: How did you choose the Academy?
HT: I had heard about Sterba and Mosby and I wanted to study with the best teachers available.
AG: What's your favorite memory of the Academy?
HT: My day-to-day study with Sterba. Learning anatomy has always been my favorite memory.
AG: Do you have a best-loved job or project from your past as an illustrator?
HT: I was an illustrator for 25 years and there were so many jobs they all ran together. I think on the whole, my work on movie (poster) paintings was the most rewarding.
AG: Who are some of your favorite artists?
HT: Howard Pyle, Winslow Homer, N.C. Wyeth, Haddon Sundblom, etc.
AG: And Academy artists?
HT: Of all the artists who have gone through the school, I think the one I respect the most is Richard Schmid.
AG: Inspiration?
HT: I'm inspired by the Plains people that I have been painting for the past 35 years.
AG: How has the Academy helped your career?
HT: The Academy has given me the basic skills which enabled me to expand and continually try to improve. The school was very well run. Of course a school is only as good as its instructors.
AG: Advice to students and aspiring artists?
HT: My advice to any aspiring artist is to work harder than you ever imagined possible. This is a very competitive world and in order to survive, and excel, you must be prepared to make sacrifices and put in endless hours working at your craft. If you have the talent and you want it bad enough you will succeed.

Figure study by Richard Schmid

Figure study by Richard Schmid

"I ALWAYS RECOMMEND A. A. A.," SAYS RICHARD SCHMID

RICHARD SCHMID

RICHARD SCHMID, a Chicagoan now living in Connecticut, is a graduate of the American Academy of Art. He is widely acclaimed for his oil paintings. His paintings have been shown in more than 18 one man exhibitions throughout the United States and a list of his awards and medals is too lengthy to enumerate here. Mr. Schmid writes as follows:

"I think the best thing I can say about the American Academy of Art is that it is the only good art school I know of. I am frequently asked to recommend a school and the A. A. A. is always my answer."

A page from The American Academy of Art school catalog, circa 1940s

Robert Wagner ad by Sandy Dvore

Eddie Fisher ad by Sandy Dvore

Sandy Dvore, 1983

SANDY DVORE

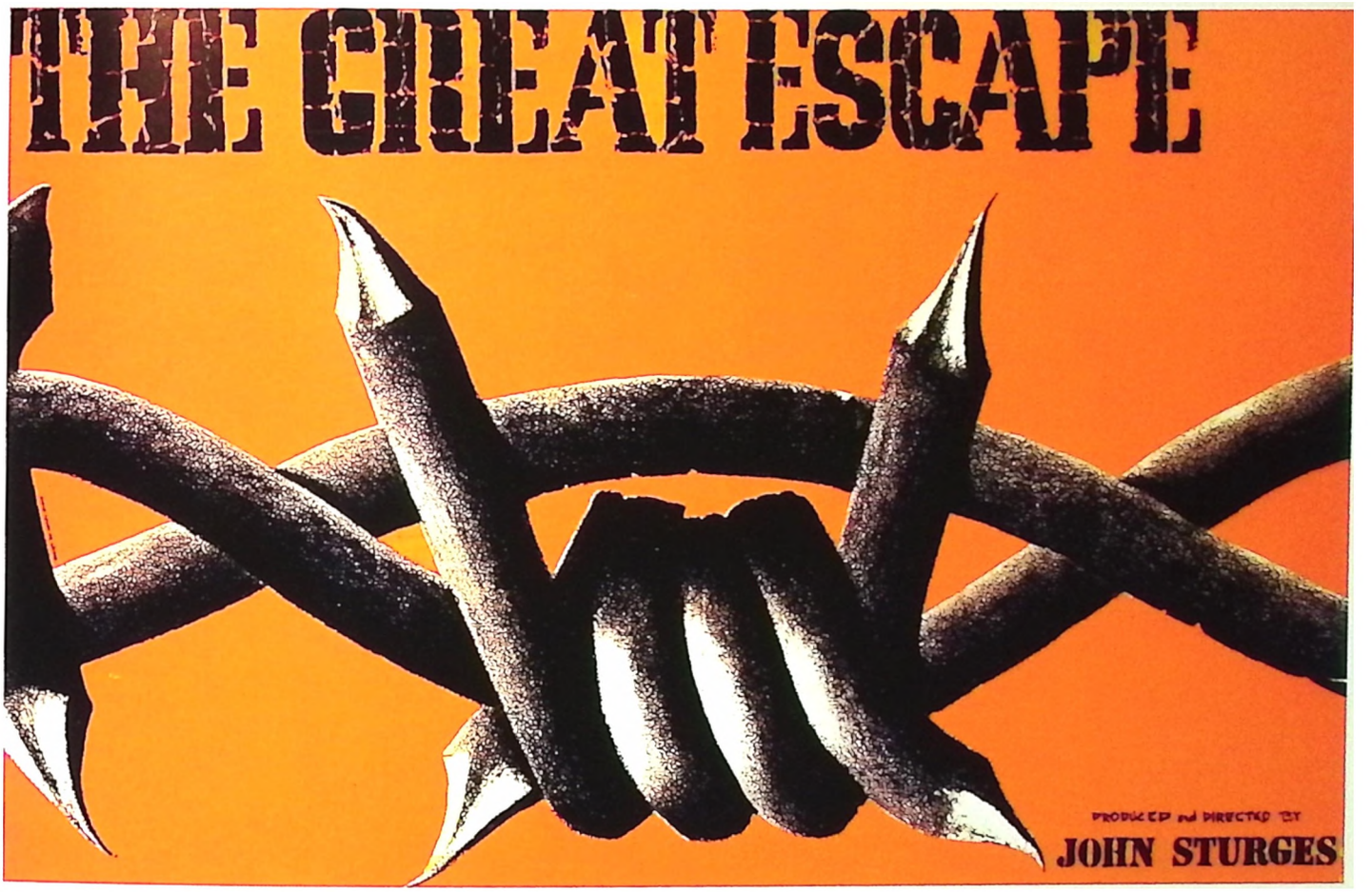
The Hollywood career of Sandy Dvore lasted longer than most actors, directors, and producers. For over 30 years he was the go-to-guy for celebrities. Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland, Sammy Davis Jr., Steve McQueen, and dozens more all trusted Dvore with making them look good. He would create iconic work for print, television, and film that is still being seen and used today. Dvore could do it all. Primarily known as a graphic designer, nevertheless many of Dvore's best pieces featured top notch illustrations in a variety of styles, all of them done with the same incredible skill.

Born and raised on the West Side of Chicago, Dvore began his post-high school education far removed from the art world. "I went to the University of Illinois and I didn't set the world on fire there! I started off in pre-med because the only guy who got any respect in my family was a doctor. But I had no ability for it so I switched over to art. They made you take all these classes that had nothing to do with art. So after a year I came back to Chicago and somehow enrolled at the American Academy of Art."

Dvore studied at the Academy from 1953-54. The school was located on Dearborn street at the time. "There was one floor with the old cage elevator. There was one design room, one life drawing room, a supply cove where you got your supplies, and offices for Frank Young Sr. and Frank Young Jr., who was running the school at the time. I don't know how many students there were, maybe 30?"

So what was so special about the Academy? "I got turned around there. Something happened while I was going there. There was an instructor there, a lovely older woman who was a watercolorist and an illustrator, and she really pampered me. She stopped by my desk throughout the day and she got behind me to where I started to feel I was doing ok. She taught me how to simplify. She would tell me, you can stop now; it's there. I picked up on that right away. I had done enough and there was no reason to chase it. When your heart tells you to stop, stop. And I got that from someone I trusted and thought I had some capability. I just loved the place. I remember where everything was and every project I did."

While at the Academy, Dvore stopped by the Artist's Guild on Ohio Street looking for work. "They used to give out the jobs in the area. They said they had an apprenticeship open at Kling Studios, which at the time was a beautiful Art Deco studio with no stairs, just ramps. It was way ahead of its time. They had all the best illustrators and specialized commercial artists all working in individual cubicles. And they needed a runner, someone to paste things up and wrap the illustrations and deliver them. It was 25 dollars a week. So I applied for the



Poster design for *The Great Escape* by Sandy Dvore

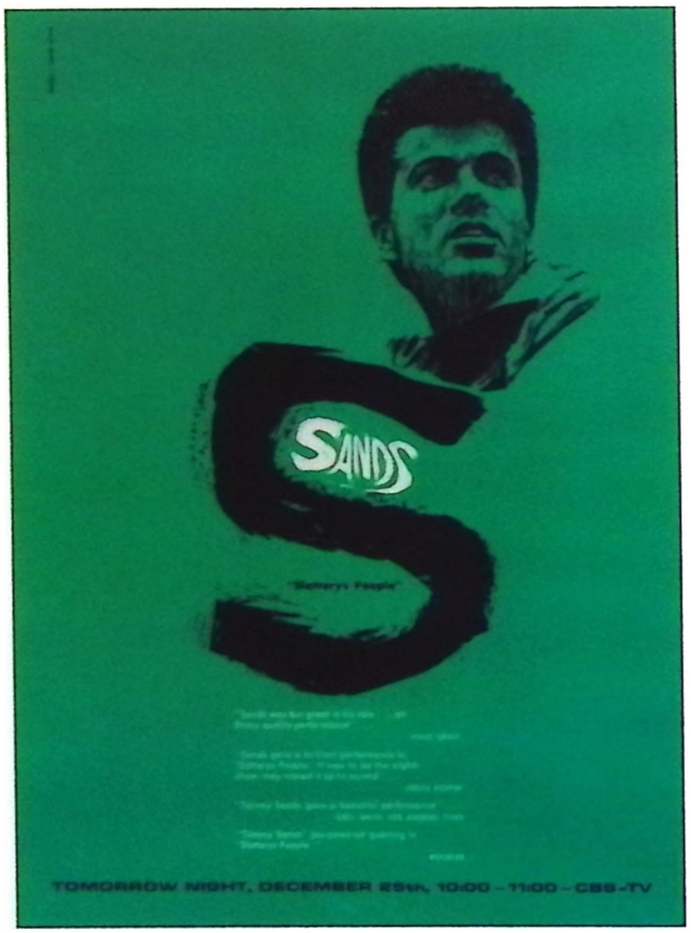
job with Ms. Ida Burke who ran the whole place. One day I got the call that they had decided they wanted me to come work for them. At the time I had been at the Academy for about a year. When I hung up the phone I remember I was in my kitchen and I was so happy that for the first time in my life I was accepted in an art thing that I lifted off the ground and hit my head on the kitchen ceiling. I actually flew into the air I was so excited."

What was it like working for the famed Kling Studios? "I worked there for about a year and got to know all these illustrators. Tom Hall, who was the great men's fashion illustrator. He dressed beautifully, had long hair and wore sunglasses, and he would just sit there with that pallet and his Whatman's watercolor board, working on a illustration. With one stroke he would add a highlight. And you never saw him correct something or get discouraged—it was just perfect. It's like his brush was alive!"

Dvore would then start an apprenticeship at advertising agency Leo Burnett, the highest position in Chicago for a student. "A hundred and twenty-five dollars a week in 1955, you could live like an American prince. But I didn't want to cut mats or run errands, I wanted to take over the creative department! I had no patience for the years it would take to move up the ladder. I would sneak ideas into meetings, and one day I came back to work and found my illustrations for an ad campaign torn and thrown in the garbage. And soon after that I was let go. Then I went over to CBS, where I heard there was a job opening in the graphics department doing cards for the late show. Hollywood agencies would send over 8 x 10s for a movie that was going to be shown that night. So one night they gave me the photographs for a Lionel Barrymore movie. I thought, I can't just paste up a picture with a hot stamp type machine and stick his name over it simply because I have nine of these to do a day, I have to draw it! And that night when I went home, there was my stuff on television, and that was it."

Sandy Dvore's first ad for Leo Burnett Agency

Around this time Dvore had seen James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause* and Marlon Brando in *On the Waterfront* and realized Hollywood had changed. "They were outcasts and outsiders—my kind of people! That's where I ought to go." So Dvore jumped in his '56 Chevy and headed down Route 66. "I decided I'd become an actor because as an artist I would just keep getting fired." Once in Hollywood, Dvore got a job at an agency doing a poster for Johnny Mathis. "But I had been affected so much by losing those jobs in Chicago, never realizing that it had nothing to do with the fact that I wasn't good, it was



Tommy Sands ad by Sandy Dvore

James Dean by Sandy Dvore

Liza Minelli by Sandy Dvore

Olivia deHavilland ad by Sandy Dvore

the fact that when they're paying you in Hollywood they want you to do what they want. I just never got that. So I figured I'd just leave and not come back before they can fire me!"

It was a different time in Hollywood. "There wasn't a ton of people out there like it is now. So I started to try and become an actor and did a couple of things. But they weren't waiting for me to do that. And after about 4 years I was having a rough time, living hand to mouth, and I was getting ready to leave but didn't know where I'd go next. I was playing baseball with a bunch of actors, entertainers and people who were established in the business. During one of these games a girl from Chicago saw me and said, 'what's Sandy doing out there playing ball? He's a wonderful artist.' So after the game this guy asked me if that was true. I said I used to be an artist but I gave it up. And he said, 'Well if you ever decide to do it again, I'm a publicist and I represent Natalie Wood, Warren Beatty, Judy Garland and Tony Bennett; we do ads for the *Hollywood Reporter* and *Variety*.' And it was important for these stars to have their every accomplishment in front of their peers on the back cover of *Variety*.

"So I needed some money and I called this publicist and asked if he had anything. He said we need an ad for Judy Garland, who is being honored for her triumph at Carnegie Hall. So I did it, the night before it was supposed to be turned in of course. After that I got a call from her agent Freddy Fields. He said, 'I wouldn't leave town if I were you, stick around.' A lot of people had called and said, 'Who did that great new ad?' They had never seen anything like that. So I went over to see this agent in this big office with velvet curtains and a big desk that looked like it cost $10,000. He said, 'Here's what I want to do with you, kid. I represent everybody in the business that's huge, everyone. And I'm gonna give you a list of everyone I represent and send you a few lines about each star every week by messenger of what current thing each star is up for. I'm gonna buy the back page of *Variety* and the *Reporter* for 52 weeks. You do anything you want to do for each one with the information I send you. And I don't have to see it, kid; I'll see it when everyone else does and just make up a bill and send it to me.'

Things had turned around for Dvore. "This is after years of parking cars for a buck. So the next ad I get is for Sammy Davis, Jr. Now I liked Judy Garland, but I loved Sammy Davis, Jr. He was opening a show at the Cocoanut Grove and they asked me if I could draw Sammy Davis, Jr. I had a week to do it and waited until the last night, like any art student...The ad came out great! I was sitting in Schwab's the day it came out and I could see the news stand from my seat, so I could see everybody who came in. Rod Steiger came in and looked at my ad, then Sidney Poitier came in and looked at it. Because every star wanted to see what their peers were doing on the back cover of *Variety*. I could see people looking at it and I knew, something's gonna happen."

Book Palace Books and Wandering Star announce the publication of

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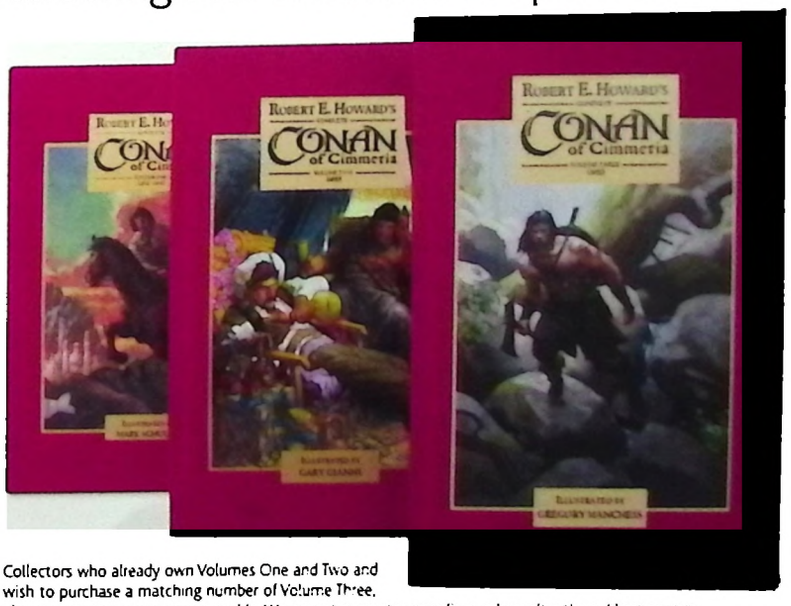
COMPLETE
CONAN
of Cimmeria
VOLUME THREE
(1935)



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Illustrated by Gregory Manchess

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Frank Sinatra by Sandy Dvore

Sammy Davis, Jr. ad by Sandy Dvore

And something did happen. "Then the night of Sammy's opening came and I was invited to the guest's table right down front. And first thing he did when he came out on stage was say, 'I want to thank the young man who did the ad on the back cover of *Variety* for me. I want everybody to appreciate the fine illustration done for me by..." and the spotlight hit me and he introduced me to every major hitter in show business. After that they had a party and Sammy walked in and came right up to me, took my face in his hands, gave me a kiss on the cheek and said, 'thank you so much, that was wonderful what you did for me.' And he did this every time we saw each other, for thirty-some years up until the last time I saw him two weeks before he died. He would kiss me on the cheek and say, 'Sandy...Sandy, thank you.' That drawing really put me on the map."

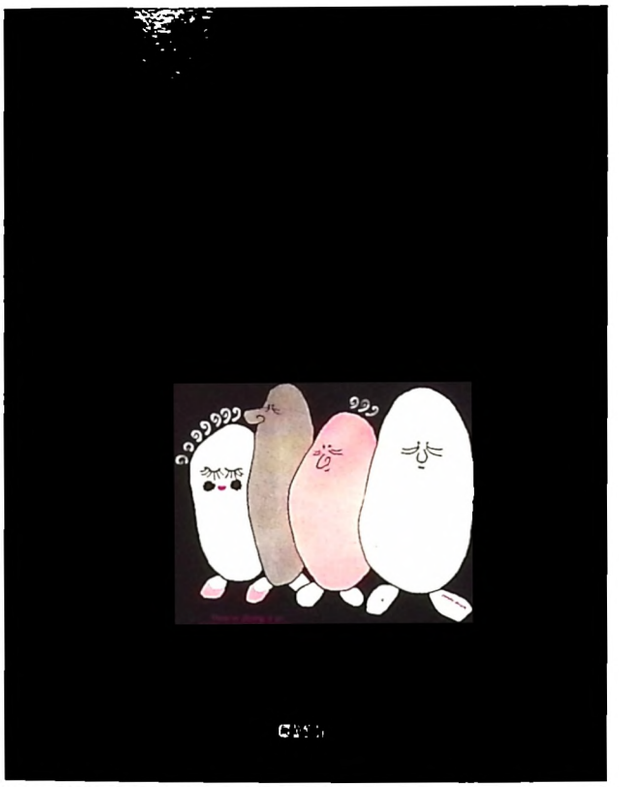
Sandy Dvore had finally arrived and was off and running. "The work was everything. The work made me happy. When people would ask, 'did you study this? Did you go to school?' I would always say the American Academy of Art. And after about four years of solid work I got to expand. I would do a pen-and-ink illustration or a watercolor or whatever. And sometimes I would have 4 or 5 ads a week, sometimes 2 or 3 a day for different clients. You couldn't have the same drawing style over and over. So I would do totally different things, a cartoon or whatever and I would hide my name. So, when these agents would see it they would say, 'we don't have to keep paying Dvore these huge sums because there's somebody new in town.' And then they would find out it was really me. Hollywood was very fickle. Too much of the same thing and they get bored easily."

Working for Frank Sinatra was a special experience for Dvore. "The illustrations I did for him were so tight because he was cool; I couldn't have fun with Sinatra, but he was very polite. There was never a time I did an ad for him that I didn't get a thank you. When I would meet with him he would say, 'You got too much hair kid!' One thing he always asked me to do was hide some orange in any ad I did for him. It was good luck for him. He was a cool customer. People were also afraid of him. He was larger than life."

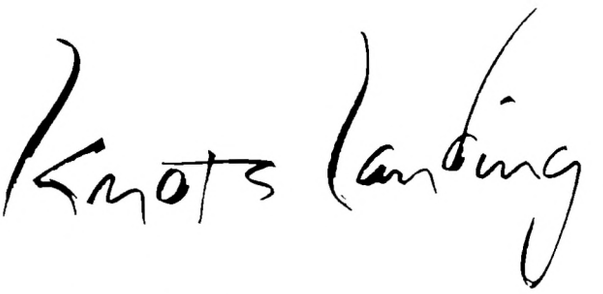
Dvore would then add television and film title sequences to his list of accomplishments: *The Partridge Family*, *The Waltons*, *Police Story*, *The Miracle Worker*, *The James Dean Story*, *The Young and the Restless*, *Knots Landing*, *North and South*, *Spencer for Hire*, the United Artist's logo, and many more.

Times were changing yet again in Hollywood. Studios began to create the work themselves. "That's why stars don't have the charisma they have today. It all became corporate. It's not custom tailored anymore. It's all computers, and the great smell of oil paints and rubber cement is gone... But it all started at the Academy. This place changed my life."

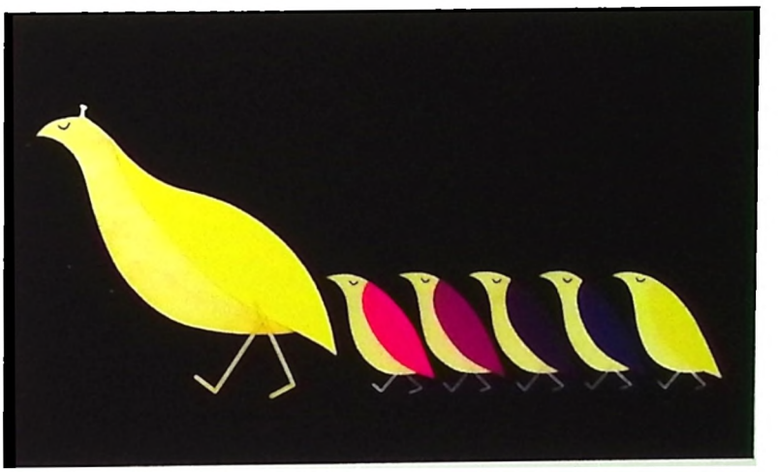
Dvore would go on to win an Emmy for his titles on the *Carol Burnett Special*. Today he continues to create art and take on anything that comes his way. He recently returned to acting, starring in a movie for the American Film Institute.



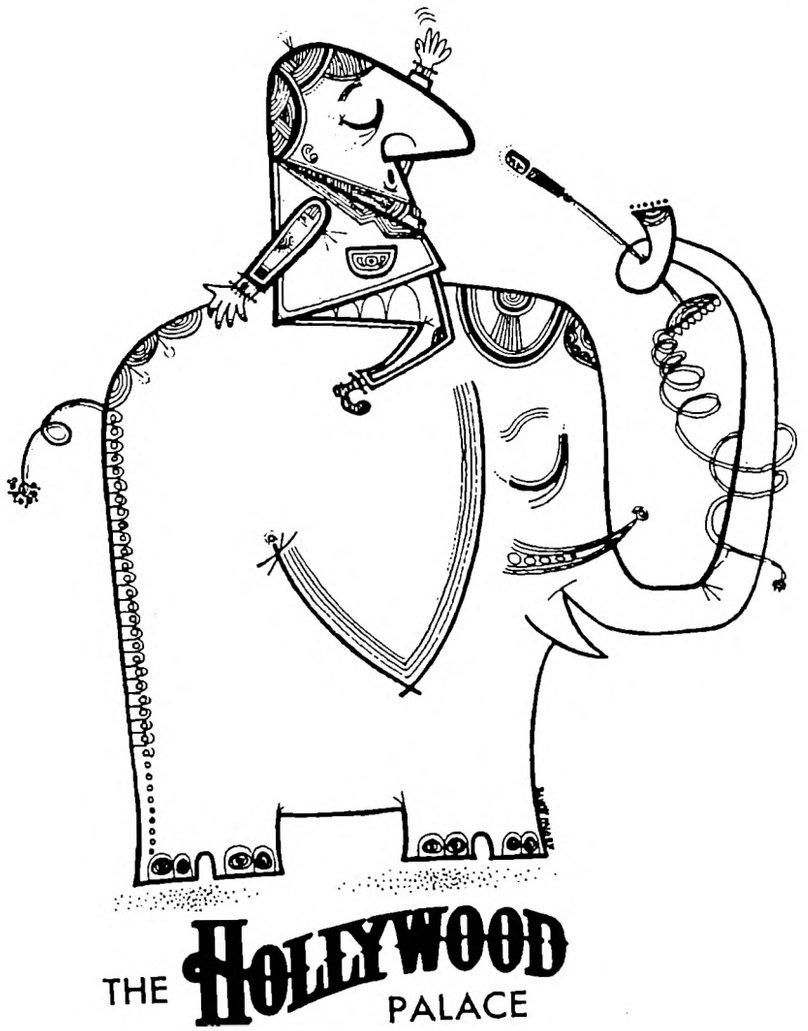
Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice ad by Sandy Dvore



Knots Landing logo by Sandy Dvore



The Partridge Family logo by Sandy Dvore



The Hollywood Palace logo by Sandy Dvore

The Young and the Restless logo by Sandy Dvore

United Artists logo by Sandy Dvore

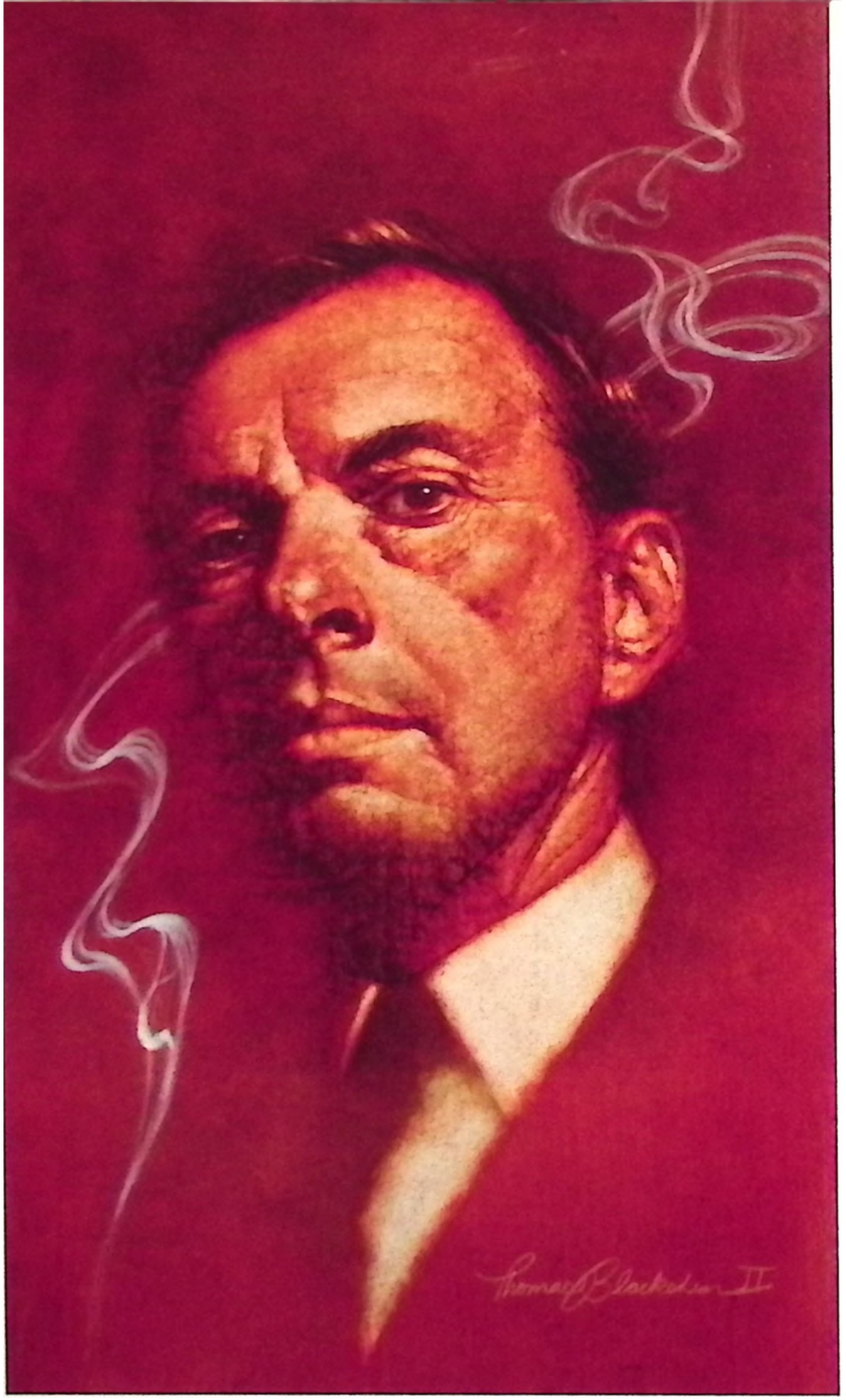


Illustration by Thomas Blackshear

THOMAS BLACKSHEAR

Ever since he could remember, Thomas Blackshear knew he wanted to be an illustrator. And by the time he graduated from the Academy in 1977 he had already attained legendary status among his fellow students. "The reason I came out to Chicago is that in high school there weren't many choices of art schools. I heard about the Art Institute of Chicago and thought that must be it, the institute of art. I got a scholarship there and that's what brought me out there. The day before I was supposed to leave I went and visited my art teacher and he had a friend there who said he went to a little art school in Chicago and I asked what school? And he said the American Academy of Art. He said he had a friend there and maybe I could look him up. So I went to the Institute and was pretty disappointed when I was there. Then I went to visit this guy at the Academy, Mike Desatnik, who was the illustration teacher at the time. And he showed me the Academy and my mouth dropped open! I said, 'I am in the wrong place.'

While still attending the Art Institute, Blackshear began taking weekend classes at the Academy. "I got to meet Irving Shapiro and he gave me a 10-week scholarship. And when summer break came I decided I was never going back to the Institute of Art. It was probably the best choice I ever made. I am so thankful I came to the Academy. I started really learning things I needed to learn."

Hallmark Greeting Cards would be the next step for Blackshear. "I had gotten accepted at Hallmark while I was still in school. And one day we found out Bernie Fuchs and Mark English were going to be at a local gallery, and there was a buzz going around. So we went over there to see if we could meet them. Once they arrived we asked them what they were working on and Mark said he was getting ready to go to work at Hallmark. And he said when I get there to look him up. When I finally got there he was teaching illustration classes for the staff. There was a three-month waiting list to get into his class. But I didn't know what to do because I also had a chance to work on the Frank Frazetta film *Fire and Ice*. I decided to stay at Hallmark for a year before moving on. Once I started the class I knew I had made the right decision; this was it!"

"I went home and tried to duplicate his style. We had one assignment per month. So I did this one illustration and brought it in. We had a month to do it but I did mine in a week and brought it in. And Mark kept looking at my illustration and looking back at me. And he said, 'what's your name again?' He passed it around the class and then he got it back and just kept looking at it. About a week later after class he asked if I would be his apprentice! I was just on cloud nine to be Mark English's apprentice. Other than the Academy that was probably the best opportunity I ever had."

Things start to get busy for Blackshear. "I would work at Hallmark in the day and then go work with Mark at night. Sometimes I wouldn't even come into work because I had been up until 3 a.m. working. It was an incredible experience and I learned so much. I learned about sensitivity and the way you design things. He would make paintings that felt so soft that you could almost feel them."

After working with Mark English, Blackshear went to California with a fellow classmate to try and make it. "Nothing was happening; it was the worst six months of my life. But before I went back home for Christmas I had an interview with Disney studios. I had always wanted to work at Disney. I took my portfolio in and was in a room with all the top illustrators. But I enjoyed being a freelancer so when they offered me the job I asked them if I could freelance for them. They said 'No, it's

Drawing by Thomas Blackshear, 1977

a full time position.' And I turned it down." Blackshear then went back to his home in Atlanta. "I got a call from Mark telling me he has this huge job for Miller Brewing Company, and I need you to come back and help me, so I jumped at it. He flew me out and I lived with him for three months. He was real nervous because he didn't think we could get it done, but we got something like 25 illustrations done in about two and a half to three weeks."

After this Blackshear moved on to a head illustrator position at a local studio. "One of the exercises I would do for myself was trying to duplicate somebody else's illustration; that's how I learned. I never thought I would become successful off my own art. But after that I went freelance and did that for fourteen years. I was very blessed in my career. I didn't have to go through what a lot of illustrators did where they work their way up to a certain point. I was at the top and stayed there for most of my career, which I know didn't happen to everybody."

However, from 1983-85 Blackshear suffered a severe depression. "That was devastating, here I was at the top of my game, getting to be pretty well known and making money, and it just didn't do anything for me. And it kind of shocked me because I wanted to be an illustrator; that was my goal to be a successful, famous illustrator. And one day some guy said to me something I never forgot: 'Why are you working so hard?' It was a cycle I was in and I didn't know how to get out of it. When I finally came out of the depression I realized I didn't want to be an illustrator anymore. It wasn't that I didn't like to draw anymore; I didn't like the business. I got tired of always working my behind off, and all the problems I had with art directors throwing me a job Thursday and by Monday you have to have it done. Everybody else is having a life and I just got tired of it. I don't love it anymore because I'm just trying to get a job done for somebody else. I didn't have time to learn who I was as an artist, or experiment anymore."

Blackshear decided it was time for a change in his life. "Even though it took me six years to make the transition, that was the beginning of it. I was still an illustrator and very successful, and then I also started to become really well known across the country in gallery shows. And one time I got on my knees and prayed; I said, 'God, I can't keep going like this. I need to learn how to have my money work for me instead of me working for my money.' And I prayed for a job that I could get royalties on. A month later I got a call from a collector's plate company asking to do a Wizard of Oz series. And I had just had an argument with my wife about taking anymore work. I finally got up enough courage to talk to my wife and say, 'I know you don't want me to do it but it pays royalties.' 'And she said I think you should take that job.' So I took it and that was the beginning of how I work now."

A new phase had begun in the career of Blackshear. "I did so many collector plates, Wizard of Oz and Star Trek. Years before that I came back to visit the Academy and Irving Shapiro and he said, Thomas have you ever considered doing plates? I said I don't want to do plates, I'm an illustrator. And I laugh at that now because that's what I ended up doing. And after that they moved me into the collectible industry. I started going to collectible conventions, and the first time I went my mouth hit the floor, I had no idea. I was meeting all these people, these artists who were millionaires off of doing plates. And I'm like, I can do this!"

"I met these women doing these black figurines. And one of them said to me, 'Have you ever thought about doing figurines?' And I said, 'No, I'm not interested in that.' And she said, 'You should think about it because I think you would be very successful.' She put the seed in my head and it eventually grew into an idea. That idea eventually grew into Ebony Visions, which is what most people know me for. I got this opportunity to do a black figure line and they came to me with the same old thing that everybody did. A black dancer, a singer, a musician…I didn't want to do any of that. I wanted to do something sophisticated. So I had an idea and showed it to all the advisors and they didn't think it was gonna sell. But the president of the company said I still want to do it. And two months after the first figurine came out they made their first million dollars. I was just blessed to get into it at the right time. Always have the time to think outside of the box because it will benefit you in the long run."

Among Thomas Blackshear's many accomplishments are more than twenty postage stamps, a portrait of Pope John Paul commissioned by the Vatican, and his Ebony Visions figurines, which are one of the most popular lines of collectibles in the world.

Thomas Blackshear, 2009

Poster for *The Lord of the Rings* by Michael Elins

Elins with portrait of Bill Parks, 2009

MICHAEL ELINS

The career path of Michael Elins has taken him from movie poster illustration to the cover of *Rolling Stone*. Today, Elins photographs some of the world's most famous people for the cover of every major magazine. He was a pioneer in the world of digital imaging, becoming one of the first people to combine photography with illustration. Elins started at the Academy in the late '70s, and like many other students, had a dream to be an illustrator. "My life drawing instructor Bill Parks had the greatest impact on me as a student there. I loved the Academy and learned so much there. The disciplined instruction helped me develop a terrific foundation for my career. The fact that I was never a can't-miss kind of student and ended up where I am today is something I want to emphasize to students. Determination and showing up is 90% of the battle."

Elins first position was as an in-house illustrator at Chicago's Phase II Studios. Working alongside Elins was Cory Pearson, his friend and fellow Academy classmate. Pearson recalled, "We both did work for Leo Burnett, Flair Merchandising, Crain Chicago Business, American Medical Association, Purina, just a ton of work for all the surrounding ad agencies. We worked on some early product development illustrations for *Return of the Jedi*. We had photos nobody else in the country had, and we had to sign a promise not to discuss any of the projects we were working on." Around this time both Elins and Pearson received Awards of Excellence from the *Communication Arts* Illustration Annual.

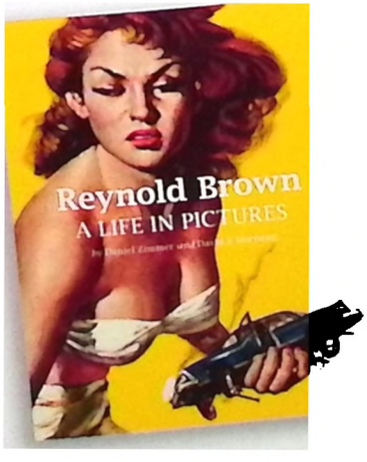
One day while looking at a movie poster on the wall of the studio, Elins thought he would like to illustrate movie posters too. He packed up his car and headed to Los Angeles, and before long he was illustrating posters and creating images for the movie industry. Incredible as it seems, the story had only just begun. While in Los Angeles he got his first crack at computer illustration and put away his airbrush and paints for good.

While working on an assignment for the *New York Times* magazine involving photography, Elins asked the art director, "Who's going to shoot it?" The answer was an unexpected one: "You are." With little knowledge of how to even work the camera, Elins began yet another phase of his career. "I didn't even know what button to push." The project offered him a chance to blend photography with his highly developed digital illustration skills, creating something new and different and not always welcome. "While working on the *Lord of the Rings* poster, I combined the pictures with both digital and traditional painted textures. It was between me and one other artist, and they went with mine. The other artist was not happy."

In today's fast-moving world artists starting out can only benefit from knowing as many different skills as possible. "I was working on what was to be the first animated cover for *Wired* magazine's web site. Before I could finish, *Esquire* did the same thing. The ground was liquefying below my feet. That's how fast things move." Elins also added, "Work hard in developing the fundamentals—drawing, painting and art history. You'll call on them every day. Once you have that foundation, you'll always be equipped for new challenges."

Elins spoke of an inspirational story of how you should never give up your goals. "We had a class project at the Academy to do a cover for *Time* magazine. I worked on it for weeks and all I wanted was for the instructor to hang it up in the class, but he didn't. I was crushed. Years later I was in New York and managed to get my way into the office of the art director for *Time*. He looked at my portfolio and told me they would never use my illustrations at *Time* magazine. And now years later I've done several covers for *Time*. Rejection is an essential component of success. Embrace it, but don't let it or your reactions to it define you. Some of life's best lessons are learned through rejection."

Michael Elins has shot or created covers for *Wired*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, *Rolling Stone* (including the 1,000th issue), movie posters for the first two *Lord of the Rings* films, Katy Perry's latest album cover, a video project for Apple illustrating how the Blue Man Group uses the iPhone in innovative ways, and the 2009 Standard Hotel Calendar.



William Reynold Brown (1917–1991) was a prolific American artist whose career embraced virtually every facet of the illustration field. During his life he produced work for the newspaper comics (*Tailspin Tommy*), North American Aviation, painted covers for some of the first paperback books ever published, illustrated scores of magazines and magazine covers, and most notably produced over 300 movie posters for the motion picture industry. After his retirement, Reynold found success as a fine artist, producing hundreds of oil paintings and drawings for the Western art market.

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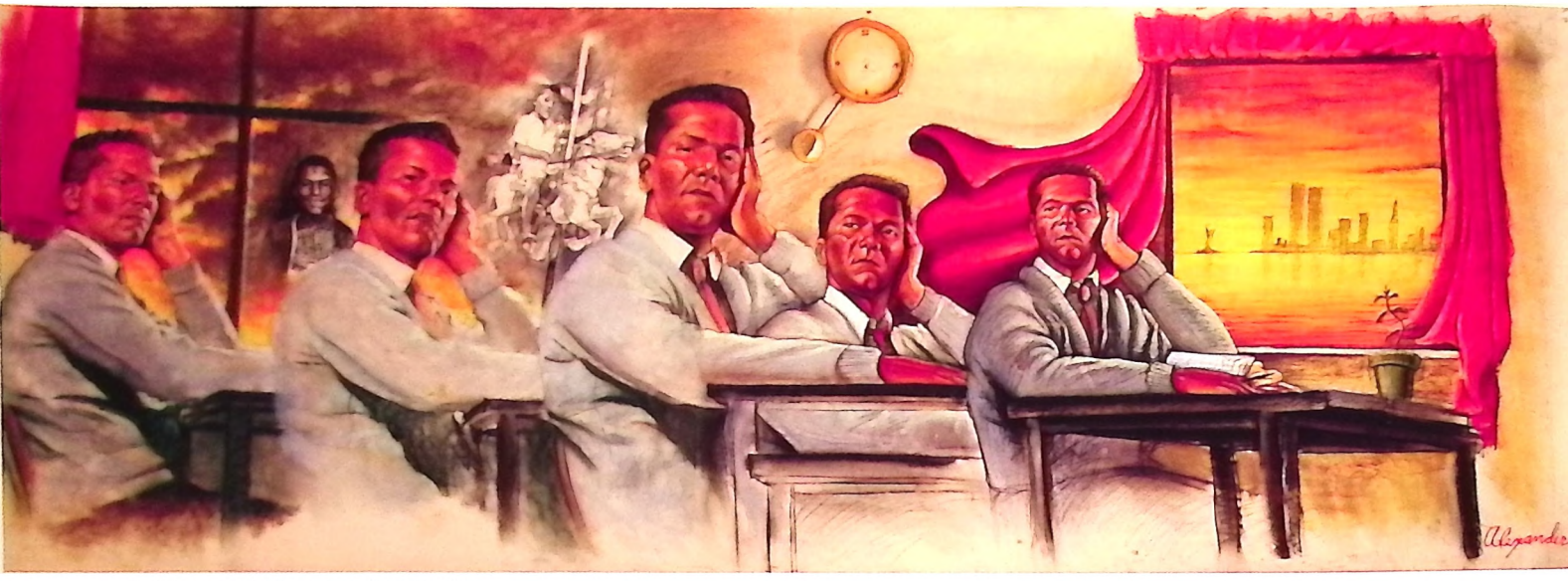

Pastel painting by Alex Ross and Tony Goskie

Alex Ross and Tony Goskie at work in class

ALEX ROSS

Alex Ross' fantastic painted images have gained him a legion of fans, from comic book lovers to those who never opened a comic but simply admire his incredible paintings of the world's greatest superheroes. While at the Academy, Ross had two stand-out instructors. Both would help to shape his art and life, and become his dear friends along the way. Rich Kryczka and Lou Ann Burkhardt have each been with the school for close to 25 years. Here they share some of their memories of Alex Ross as a student.

Aron Gagliardo: What do remember most about Alex as a student?

Rich Kryczka: One thing I remember is, he said in his second year, "he wants to be a comic book artist and he's going to be a comic book artist." That was his driving force. He's one of those few people that were that focused. He's doing exactly what he set out to do.

Lou Ann Burkhardt: After knowing him for a while, he came to my place at Tree Studios and we sat in the garden. He told me at that time it was his dream to do the Human Torch. This was when he was eighteen years old. The other students all liked him and he was very giving in the classroom. People already admired his work. Ever since he was young he had a pencil in his hand. That's what he wanted to do.

RK: He was good when he got here, but he got better and better—and he's still getting better!

LB: He's one of those people, and there aren't many like this, but they have a dream and they stick with it. And whatever comes in life doesn't change that routine. He's able to maintain the discipline of the process. And he wanted to make meaningful stories for people.

RK: Everything about his success he earned on his own.

LB: There was a favorite painting of mine in the museum, and he asked to borrow my pastels. He went and photographed the painting, and then he did a huge pastel of that painting for me, and put my daughter in it.

RK: He would always try different media to find out what works best. He was really good at experimenting, which is something every artist should do.

AG: Did Alex stand out from the other students at first?

LB: From the very first day in my class as a freshman he stood out. He had already been drawing a long time, and I think he learned from his mother, and he probably looked at Andrew Loomis a lot.

RK: He probably worked three times as hard as everyone else. He would be doing extra projects, and he followed the instructor's rules, showing sketches and thumbnails. He was a regular guy like everybody else, who worked really hard. I think he brought everybody else up a notch because of that. He was probably his own worst critic. If he didn't like it he kept working on it and fixed it.

AG: How did each of you as instructors help him develop?

RK: Again, I think giving him the room to experiment. Maybe I had a little help in guiding him to getting a job. Coaching him a little.

LB: Like a coach you sort of counsel. It's doesn't have anything to do with the technical, but life as we live it and how we deal. In my class I try to talk about life drawing as life. The love of teaching, and the love of being with other artists. Maybe you learn more from them. I think we're more like a family to Alex. To have such a gift and to know that he could live his dream.

Now let's hear from Alex Ross himself and his history with the American Academy of Art:

AG: How did you choose the Academy?
AR: Basically it was pre-ordained. I didn't have any question about where I was going to go to school as a young boy. It seemed pretty obvious that if I was copying my mother's path as an artist, I would just attend the same school. We also have deep family roots in Chicago. Both of my parents were born here. When I was young, around fourteen, my mother brought me into the school and we met Irving Shapiro, who was on hand when my mother was a student around 1945 or '46. It was always something of pride that I had these long-standing roots within the environment of the school.
AG: Tell me about your first year.
AR: I went through the summers and was able to barrel through a two-year program for an associates degree in illustration in under two years. I do have one anecdote, more of a general observation that might be worthwhile. Going from high school where there were no models. And also I took a weekend course at Texas Tech University. But I never had the kind of experience, not even a taste of what I would learn in my very first week at the Academy. Starting on that very first day we had a live model who was doing quick poses for us, which was at first dissatisfying because I really wanted to sink my teeth in and show just how much I could render an object, given what I had done for years on my own. It was my first opportunity to be up against a room full of people and to show what I could do. The fact that I could more or less capture a fairly accurate representation of the human form made me very proud. And made me have that sense of, wow! I never really thought much about looking at a thing to draw a thing. It was always about how your mind collects it and regurgitates it later. So, that was an eye opener of a very pleasant sort that had me charged up for those first weeks, months, and so on. Just feeling like I could achieve anything I put my mind and efforts to.
AG: Could you talk about Rich Kryczka and Lou Ann Burkhardt, and what you learned from them as instructors and people?
AR: Those were the strongest associations I made at the school. Certainly I enjoyed the interactions I had with other teachers at the school, Lois Hrejsa and Ted Smuskiewicz. Everyone sort of had that quality of taking you under their wing so to speak. I don't know if I got special treatment, but I must have. Because the friendship I had with Lou Ann was exceptional. But then again I've seen over the years Lou Ann is probably the most giving person to so many people. And I think she hones in on people who need that. Whether or not you're the most talented. I think she's very interested in giving support to those who are needing it. And God knows I needed it in my seventeenth and eighteenth year of life. And our friendship remained very strong for the years that followed. I've known both people over twenty years. And it's very pleasant to know that at the core of the school there are these two people who are an institution from my sense.

Oil painting by Alex Ross and Tony Goskie

Oil painting by Alex Ross

One of the good things about working with Lou Ann as a life drawing teacher was the idea of experimentation within in that form. She was not a taskmaster that had everybody do one thing all the time. Whether it was working with different materials or compositional things that might be more elaborate. This was at least engaging to my brain. And all of it was encouraged. Which was one of the great things about Lou Ann. Also, she would put up your projects on the wall for everybody to see. That quality of exhibition that artists are often driven by, she was giving you that sensation. I'm in great debt to her effect upon my life and my youth. She was one of the most positive elements of my young life.

AG: Favorite artist or illustrators not from the comic book field?

AR: Andrew Loomis would be one of those figures that would be hugely influential, ironically as it turns out on a great many famous comic book artists. His art instruction books particularly Figure Drawing for All It's Worth is just the bible for quite a few of us. It's been out of print for so long it's one of those things that makes it more legendary. I grew up with it because my mom had those books when she was younger and she just passed them on to me. And I looked at them mostly for the pictures of what looked like really photographic pictures of naked women. Subconsciously I absorbed some amount of that sensibility of Loomis' style, which was just clearly representational. In fact I would say it's kind of the best translation of the complexity of how Norman Rockwell's painted illustrations can be translated on more of a graphite drawing level. Ironically that's ultimately what you get by going to the Academy. There was a direct connection for me and I have great pride in the fact that like so many of the other guys that have the books but not the background of the place, I got that method from kind of the home base.

When I moved out to Chicago I got my library card and I started getting out books from all the different illustrators. I probably went through more of a phase of examining the creativity of Salvador Dali. His juxtaposition of very realistic painted illustration with fantastic ideas. At that point in the late '80s I had yet to see the kind of really impressive level of realistic fantasy illustration that would come quickly in the years that would follow.

AG: At the time were you aware of the history of the school and the illustrators who had studied there, such as Haddon Sundblom and Gil Elvgren?

AR: I didn't have a strong enough approximation of who Sundblom was but of course I would come to know that. Elvgren of course was legendary. I learned more and more about that over the years from remaining in contact with Lou Ann Burkhardt as she tried to single-handedly revive the history of the school. It was kind of left in a closet. It really came from the ground up with her ambition to put it out there. And luckily she was able to accomplish those goals.

AG: Favorite memory of the school?

AR: There was so many pleasant things and people and friendships that I made that I kept for the past 20 years. There's also models that I made friendships with that have remained part of my work for the years since. The artist/model Meg Guttman, she is married to a good friend of mine, Steve Darnall. We knew each other back in school and I've always stayed in contact with them and use both as reference models. Another student, Matt Paoletti, who worked with me at Leo Burnett, he became my Bat-Man model.

AG: How did the Academy help in your career?

AR: I've often said gladly that it's schooling that made me the artist that I am. It made me competent to a degree that was useful in my work in the field of professional commercial illus-

tration. The education changed me practically overnight because I connected immediately with what its use was, and I dove in quite deeply to what it would offer.

TODAY

The American Academy of Art is a regionally accredited institution offering a Bachelor of Fine Arts program with specializations in Illustration, Life Drawing, Oil Painting, Watercolor Painting, Design, Multimedia/Web Design, and 3D Modeling & Animation. Located on Michigan Avenue in downtown Chicago, the Academy continues its legacy of emphasizing the fundamentals, and inspiring its students to become great artists.

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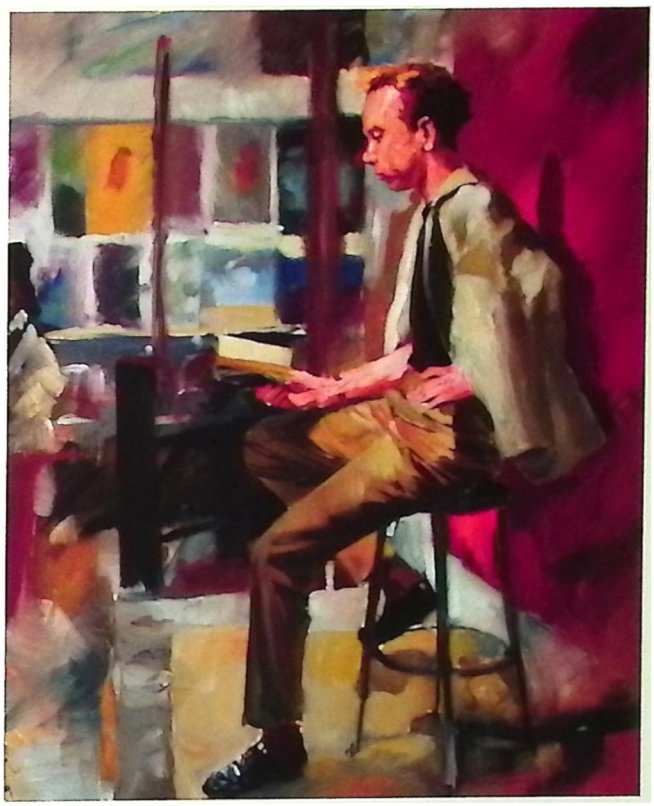
Aron Gagliardo is an artist and designer. To find out about his work, please visit his website at www.arongagliardo.com

For more about the Academy, visit: www.theamericanacademyofart.com

Thanks to all the artists who gave of their time to help make this feature: Joyce Ballantyne, Howard Terpning, Sandy Dvore, Thomas Blackshear, Alex Ross, and Michael Elins. Rich Kryczka and Lou Ann Burkhardt. Corey Pearson, Jason Sherman, John Spomar for his photos of the art. Lindsay Harmon for her editing. And once again to Dan Zimmer for his enthusiasm and great design.



Oil painting by Alex Ross

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BY JIM SILKE, FORWARD BY LYNN MAGUIRE
96 PAGES, FULL-COLOR
$24.95 SOFTCOVER
DARK HORSE, 2009

In the course of his long and illustrious career, renowned illustrator Robert A. Maguire created gorgeous cover images for more than a thousand books and worked for virtually every mainstream publisher in the U.S. Best known for his incomparably sexy "femme fatale" images for pulp paperbacks in the 1950s and 1960s, Maguire built a long and legendary career showcasing character portraits that were iconic and beautiful, painting subjects that felt simultaneously real and sensually compelling. Now, art historian and pin-up artist Jim Silke casts his curatorial eye toward Maguire's long and fascinating career in his first art collection/artist biography, *Dames, Dolls, and Gun Molls.*

This oversized paperback (9x12 inches) is beautifully designed, and is filled with reproductions of both original paintings and scores of vintage paperbacks.

THE BRINKLEY GIRLS: THE BEST OF NELL BRINKLEY'S CARTOONS FROM 1913-1940

EDITED BY TRINA ROBBINS
136 PAGES, FULL-COLOR
$29.99 HARDCOVER
FANTAGRAPHICS, 2009

For over thirty years Nell Brinkley's beautiful girls pirouetted, waltzed, Charlestoned, vamped and shimmied their way through the pages of William Randolph Hearst's newspapers, captivating the American public with their innocent sexuality. This sumptuously designed oversized hardcover collects Brinkley's breathtakingly spectacular, exquisitely colored full-page art from 1913 to 1940. Here are her earliest silent movie serial-inspired adventure series, "Golden Eyes and Her Hero, Bill;" her almost too romantic series, "Betty and Billy and Their Love Through the Ages;" her snappy flapper comics from the 1920s; her 1937 pulp magazine-inspired "Heroines of Today." Included are photos of Nell, reproductions of her hitherto unpublished paintings, and an informative introduction by the book's editor, Trina Robbins.

In 1907, at the tender age of 22, Nell Brinkley came to New York to draw for the Hearst syndicate. Within a year, she had become a household name. Flo Ziegfeld dressed his dancers as "Brinkley Girls" in the Ziegfeld Follies. Three popular songs were written about her. Women, aspiring to the masses of curly hair with which Nell adorned her fetching and idealized creations, could buy Nell Brinkley Hair Curlers for ten cents a card. Young girls cut out and saved her drawings, copied them, colored them, and pasted them in scrapbooks. The Brinkley Girls took over from the Gibson Girls.

Nell Brinkley widened her scope to include pen and ink depictions of working women. Brinkley used her fame to campaign for better working conditions and higher pay for women who had joined in the war effort, and who were suffering economic and social dislocation due to acting on their patriotism. Unlike most of her contemporaries, she drew women of different races and cultures.

FROM THE PEN OF PAUL: THE FANTASTIC IMAGES OF FRANK R. PAUL

BY STEPHEN D. KORSHAK
128 PAGES, FULL-COLOR
$39.95 HARDCOVER
SHASTA-PHOENIX, 2009

This beautifully designed and printed new book concerns the work of Frank R. Paul (1884-1963), the undisputed father of science-fiction illustration. His groundbreaking work for publisher Hugo Gernsback's *Amazing Stories*, the very first science fiction magazine, defined the genre for decades to come. He designed the cover and the logo for the first issue of *Amazing Stories* in 1926, and then went on to paint 38 more covers for the magazine until Gernsback lost control of the publication. Paul followed Gernsback in his next adventures, and produced some 200 other covers for magazines such as *Air Wonder Stories*, *Science Wonder Stories*, *Wonder Stories*, *Planet Stories*, *Superworld Comics*, *Science Fiction*, *Science Fiction Plus*, and the very first issue of *Marvel Comics*, which featured the Human Torch and the Sub-Mariner. It is important to remember that Paul's visions of robots, spaceships, and aliens were presented at a time when most Americans didn't even own a telephone. Indeed, they were the first science fiction images seen by Ray Bradbury, Arthur C. Clarke, Forrest J. Ackerman, and others who would go on to great prominence in the field.

THE SWEETLY DIABOLIC ART OF JIM FLORA

EDITED BY IRWIN CHUSID & BARBARA ECONOMON
180 PAGES, FULL-COLOR
$34.99 HARDCOVER
FANTAGRAPHICS, 2009

Like its two predecessors (*The Mischievous Art of Jim Flora* and *The Curiously Sinister Art of Jim Flora*), this new anthology features paintings, drawings, and sketches created by artist Jim Flora from the 1940s through the 1990s—many never previously published or exhibited; more artifacts from the artist's 1940s tenure in the Columbia Records art department; and vintage newspaper and magazine illustrations.

This collection also heralds the first publication of an early, abandoned book for youngsters, *The X-Ray Eye of Wallingford Hume*, which Flora drafted in 1943. Equally fascinating are original roughs, overlays, and concept images for his 1950s and '60s published children's books.

A gallery of 1940s pen and pencil sketches invokes a catacomb of nightmarish apparitions and inscrutable petroglyphs. *Sweetly Diabolic* also collects for the first time a sideshow of science widgetry from a short-lived, now-obscure mid-1950s monthly, *Research & Engineering*, for which Flora served as art director. Chronicles of Flora's career, personal vignettes, and mementos from the family archives augment the images.

AD BOY: ADVERTISING WITH CHARACTER

BY WARREN DOTZ & MASUD HUSAIN
176 PAGES, FULL-COLOR
$16.95 SOFTCOVER
TEN SPEED PRESS, 2009

The postwar economic boom launched a generation of charming, cheeky, and relentlessly cheerful critters and characters that found their way into our homes—and our hearts—in print, on television, and on packaging. Some took detours that reflected the times (Elsie the Cow was sent into outer space in 1958). Some were fashion victims who survived (remember hippy Hush Puppies, circa 1969?) And some are no longer with us (the Frito Bandito was finally brought to justice in 1971). These endearingly offbeat characters are as fresh and entertaining today as they were creatively inspired in decades past. More than 450 American ad characters from the 1950s, '60s, and '70s pack the pages of this vibrant collection.

THE ART OF HARVEY KURTZMAN: THE MAD GENIUS OF COMICS

BY DENIS KITCHEN & PAUL BUHLE
256 PAGES, FULL-COLOR
$40.00 HARDCOVER
ABRAMS COMICARTS, 2009

Harvey Kurtzman discovered Robert Crumb and gave Gloria Steinem her first job in publishing when he hired her as his assistant. Terry Gilliam also started at his side, met an unknown John Cleese in the process, and the genesis of Monty Python was formed. Art Spiegelman has stated on record that he owes his career to him. And he's one of *Playboy* publisher Hugh Hefner's favorite artists.

Harvey Kurtzman had a Midas touch for talent, but was himself an astonishingly talented and influential artist, writer, editor, and satirist. The creator of *MAD* and *Playboy*'s "Little Annie Fanny" was called, "One of the most important figures in postwar America" by the *New York Times*. Kurtzman's groundbreaking war comics of the early '50s and various satirical publications (*MAD*, *Trump*, *Humbug*, and *Help*!) had an immense impact on popular culture, inspiring a generation of underground cartoonists. Without Kurtzman, it's unlikely we'd have had *Airplane*, *SNL*, or *National Lampoon*.

The Art of Harvey Kurtzman is the first and only authorized celebration of this "Master of American Comics." This definitive book includes hundreds of never-before-seen illustrations, paintings, pencil sketches, newly discovered lost E.C. Comics layouts, color compositions, illustrated correspondence, and vintage photos from the rich Kurtzman archives.

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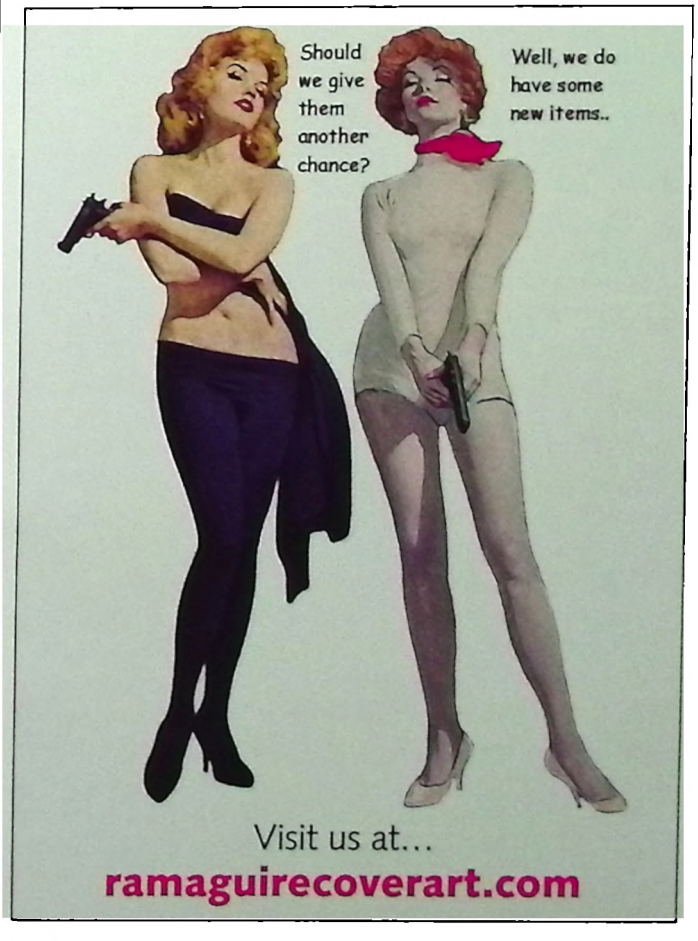

EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS

Double Exposure: Al Parker's Illustrations, from Model to Magazine

July 6 through September 25, 2009
Olin Library, Washington University, St. Louis, MO

This exhibit, from the collection of the Modern Graphic History Library at Washington University in St. Louis, explores the art-making process of magazine illustrator Al Parker. The display features original artwork and tear sheets from popular magazines published in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s. The illustrations are presented alongside photographic studies taken by Parker, depicting women, men, and children from various viewpoints and poses.

For more: http://library.wustl.edu/units/spec/MGHL/

Maidens and Monsters: The Art of Science Fiction, Aventure & Fantasy

November 24 through April 19, 2010
Albin Polasek Museum, Winter Park, FL

Maidens and Monsters includes images of alien worlds, strange beasts, dashing heroes, and buxom beauties by 22 pioneering illustrators including: N.C. Wyeth, J. Allen St. John, Frank R. Paul, Hannes Bok, Margaret Brundage, and Frank Frazetta. These illustrations appeared on the covers of timeless novels such as the Tarzan series, and classic pulp magazines from the 1930s through the 1960s such as *Amazing Stories*, *Fantastic Adventures*, *Weird Tales*, and *Wonder Stories*. Works in the exhibit date from 1914 to 1995, and are drawn from the renowned Erle Melvin Korshak and Stephen D. Korshak Collection.

For more information, visit: www.polasek.org

Jim Henson's Fantastic World

September 12 through November 29, 2009
James A. Michener Art Museum, PA

Jim Henson's Fantastic World, a new exhibition from the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) and The Jim Henson Legacy, offers a rare peek into the imagination and creative genius of this multi-talented innovator and creator of Kermit the Frog, Big Bird and other beloved characters. The exhibition will be the first to be featured in the new Syd and Sharon Martin Wing at the James A. Michener Art Museum (138 S. Pine St., Doylestown, PA) on September 12, and will remain on view until November 29, 2009.

The exhibition features 100 original artworks, including drawings, cartoons, and storyboards that illustrate Henson's talent as a storyteller and visionary. Among the variety of exhibition objects are puppets, television and movie props, photographs of Henson and his collaborators at work, and original video productions, including excerpts from Henson's early career as well as some of his experimental films.

For more information, visit: www.michenerartmuseum.org

Maxfield Parrish: Illustrated Letters

October 17 through January 17, 2010
The Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, DE

In 1884–1886, a teenage Maxfield Parrish travelled to England and Europe with his parents. In letters home to his cousin Henry Bancroft, Parrish chronicled and illustrated his experiences. These youthful illustrated letters provide a peek at life in England and Europe in the mid-1880s, and a link to Parrish's adult talent and humor.

For more information, visit: www.picturebookart.org

Illustrating Her World: Ellen B.T. Pyle

August 1 through January 3, 2010
The Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, DE

Ellen Bernard Thompson Pyle (1876-1936) was born in Germantown, Pennsylvania. She studied art at the Drexel Institute, and she was one of the few female students invited to study illustration at Howard Pyle's Chadds Ford summer school. She married Pyle's brother Walter in1904, and the demands of raising a family sidelined her career. She did not begin to create illustrations again until after Walter's unexpected death in 1919.

Though Ellen Pyle did her major work later in life, she had a substantial output. In addition to creating covers for *Parents Magazine*, *Woman's Home Companion*, and *Everybody's Magazine*, she also created 40 covers for the *Saturday Evening Post* with a recognizable style that drew acclaim from around the country. She receives the first overview of her career in this exhibition of approximately 50 works.

For more information, visit: http://www.delart.org

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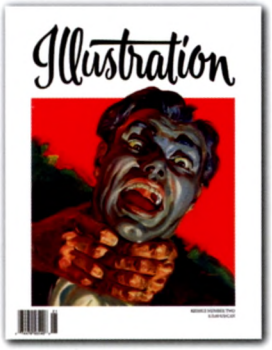

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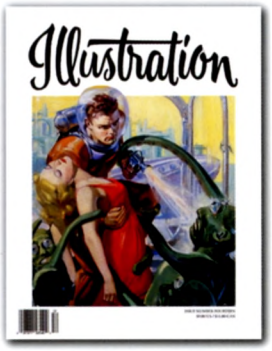

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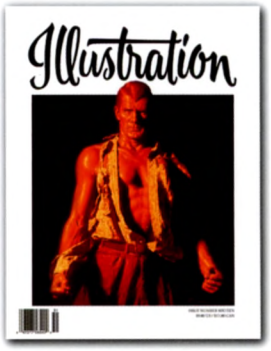

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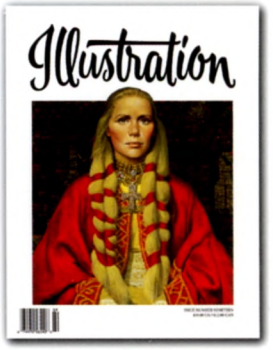

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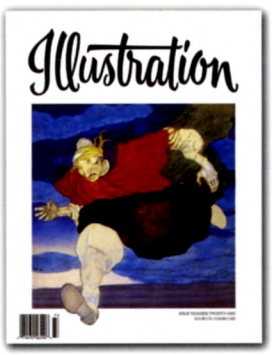

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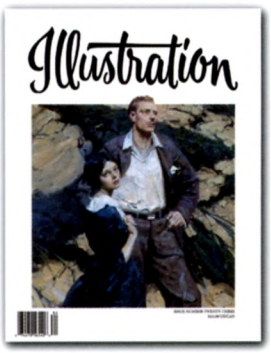

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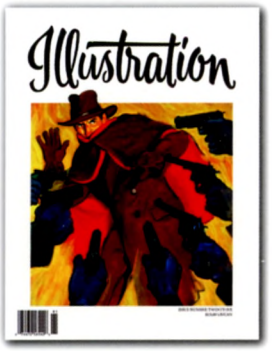

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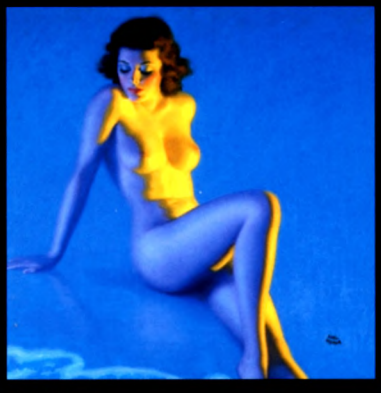
Calendar Art for Brown & Bigelow

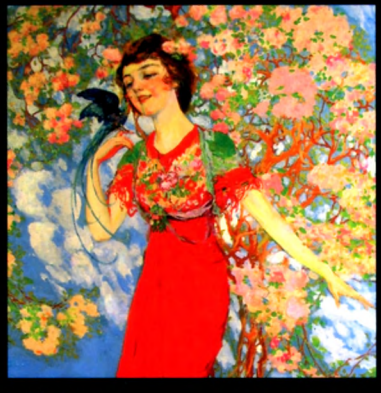
Vaughan Bass
An Iron in the Fire, 1950s
Calendar Art for Louis F. Dow



Earl Moran
Eve-N-Tide, 1940
Calendar Art for Brown & Bigelow

Billy Devorss
Prize Winner, 1930s
Calendar Art

Enoch Bolles
Port O' Dreams, 1925
Cover Art Film Fun



Willy Pogany
The Queen of Summer, 1916
Cover Art Metropolitan Magazine

Jerome Rozen
Day of the Dead, 1930s
Cover Art for Street & Smith Pulp Magazine

Earl Moran
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